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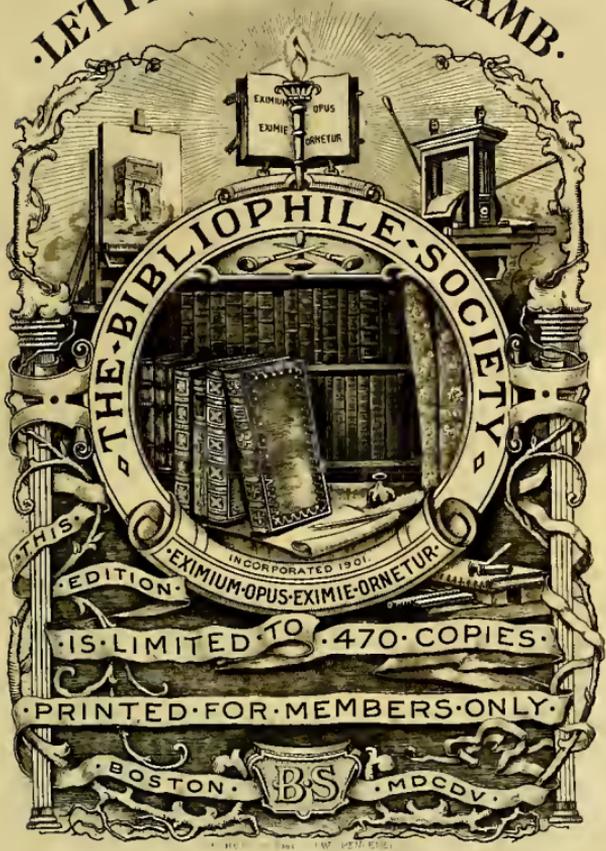
THE
LETTERS OF CHARLES LAMB

1814-1825

VOLUME IV



LETTERS OF CHAS. LAMB.



THE BIBLIOPHILE SOCIETY

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THE LETTERS OF
CHARLES LAMB

IN WHICH MANY MUTILATED WORDS
AND PASSAGES HAVE BEEN RESTORED
TO THEIR ORIGINAL FORM ; WITH
LETTERS NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED
AND FACSIMILES OF ORIGINAL MS
LETTERS AND POEMS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
HENRY H. HARPER

ISSUED BY
THE BIBLIOPHILE SOCIETY
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LETTER CCXXV

CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

August 26, 1814.

Let the hungry soul rejoice: there is corn in Egypt. Whatever thou hast been told to the contrary by designing friends, who perhaps inquired carelessly, or did not inquire at all, in hope of saving their money, there is a stock of *Remorse* on hand, enough, as Pople conjectures, for seven years' consumption; judging from experience of the last two years. Methinks it makes for the benefit of sound literature, that the best books do not always go off best. Inquire in seven years' time for the *Rokebys* and the *Laras*, and where shall they be found?—fluttering fragmentally in some thread-paper; whereas thy *Wallenstein* and thy *Remorse* are safe on Longman's or Pople's shelves, as in some Bodleian; there they shall remain; no need of a chain to hold them fast—perhaps for ages—tall copies—and people shan't run about hunting for them as in old Ezra's shrievalty they did for a Bible, almost without effect till the great-great-grandniece (by the mother's side) of Jeremiah or Ezekiel (which was it?) remembered something of a book, with odd reading in it, that used to lie in the green closet in her aunt Judith's bedchamber.

The caterer Price was at Hamburgh when last Pople heard of him, laying up for thee, like some miserly old father for his generous-hearted son to squander.

Mr. Charles Aders, whose books also pant for that free circulation which thy custody is sure to give them, is to be heard of at his kinsmen, Messrs. Jameson and Aders, No. 7 Laurence Pountney Lane, London, according to the information which Crabius with his parting breath left me. Crabius is gone to Paris. I prophesy he and the Parisians will part with mutual contempt. His head has a twist *Allemagne*, like thine, dear mystic.

I have been reading Madame [de] Staël on Germany. An impudent clever woman. But if *Faust* be no better than in her abstract of it, I counsel thee to let it alone. How canst thou translate the language of cat-monkeys? Fie on such fantasies! But I will not forget to look for *Proclus*. It is a kind of book which, when we meet with it, we shut up faster than we opened it. Yet I have some bastard kind of recollection that somewhere, some time ago, upon some stall or other, I saw it. It was either that or *Plotinus*, or Saint Augustine's *City of God*. So little do some folks value, what to others, *sc.* to you, "well used," had been the "Pledge of Immortality." Bishop Bruno I never touched upon. Stuffing too good for the brains of such a "Hare" [J. C. Hare] as thou describest. May it burst his pericranium, as

the gobbets of fat and turpentine (a nasty thought of the seer) did that old dragon in the Apocrypha! May he go mad in trying to understand his author! May he lend the third volume of him before he has quite translated the second, to a friend who shall lose it, and so spoil the publication; and may his friend find it and send it him just as thou or some such less dilatory spirit shall have announced the whole for the press; lastly, may he be hunted by Reviewers, and the devil jug him!

So I think I have answered all the questions except about Morgan's gos-lettuces. The first personal peculiarity I ever observed of him (all worthy souls are subject to 'em) was a particular kind of rabbit-like delight in munching salads with oil without vinegar after dinner — a steady contemplative browsing on them — didst never take note of it? Canst think of any other queries in the solution of which I can give thee satisfaction? Do you want any books that I can procure for you? Old Jimmy Boyer is dead at last.

Trollope has got his living, worth £1000 a-year net. See, thou sluggard, thou heretic-sluggard, what mightest thou not have arrived at! Lay thy animosity against Jimmy in the grave. Do not *entail* it on thy posterity.

C. LAMB

CCXXVI. — TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

September 19, 1814.

My dear W.,— I have scarce time or quiet to explain my present situation, how unquiet and distracted it is. Owing to the absence of some of my compeers, and to the deficient state of payments at E. I. H., owing to bad peace speculations in the calico market (I write this to W. W., Esq., Collector of Stamp duties for the conjoint northern counties, not to W. W., Poet) I go back, and have for these many days past, to evening work, generally at the rate of nine hours a day. The nature of my work, too, puzzling and hurrying, has so shaken my spirits, that my sleep is nothing but a succession of dreams of business I cannot do, of assistants that give me no assistance, of terrible responsibilities.

I reclaimed your book, which Hazlitt has uncivilly kept, only two days ago, and have made shift to read it again with shattered brain. It does not lose— rather some parts have come out with a prominence I did not perceive before— but such was my aching head yesterday (Sunday) that the book was like a mountain landscape to one that should walk on the edge of a precipice. I perceived beauty dizzily. Now what I would say is, that I see no prospect of a quiet half-day or hour even till this week and the next are past. I then hope to get four weeks' absence, and if *then* is time enough to begin I will most gladly

do what you require, tho' I feel my inability, for my brain is always desultory, and snatches off hints from things, but can seldom follow a "work" methodically. But that shall be no excuse. What I beg you to do is to let me know from Southey, if that will be time enough for the *Quarterly*, i. e. suppose it done in three weeks from this date (September 19): if not, it is my bounden duty to express my regret and decline it.

Mary thanks you and feels highly grateful for your Patent of Nobility, and acknowledges the author of *Excursion* as the legitimate Fountain of Honour. We both agree, that to our feeling Ellen is best as she is. To us there would have been something repugnant in her challenging her penance as a dowry! the fact is explicable, but how few to whom it could have been render'd explicit!

The unlucky reason of the detention of *Excursion* was, Hazlitt and we having a misunderstanding. He blowed us up about six months ago, since which the union hath snapt, but M. Burney borrow'd it for him, and after reiterated messages I only got it on Friday. His remarks had some vigour in them, particularly something about an old ruin being *too modern for your primeval nature, and about a lichen*, but I forget the passage; but the whole wore a slovenly air of despatch and disrespect. That objection which M. Burney had imbibed from him about Vol-

taire, I explain'd to M. B. (or tried) exactly on your principle of its being a characteristic speech. That it was no settled comparative estimate of Voltaire with any of his own tribe of buffoons — no injustice, even if *you* spoke it, for I dared say you never could relish *Candide*. I know I tried to get thro' it about a twelvemonth since, and could n't for the dulness. Now, I think I have a wider range in buffoonery than you. Too much toleration perhaps.

I finish this after a raw ill-bak'd dinner, fast gobbled up, to set me off to office again after working there till near four. O Christ! how I wish I were a rich man, even tho' I were squeezed camel-fashion at getting thro' that needle's eye that is spoken of in the *Written Word*. Apropos, are you a Christian? or is it the Pedlar and the Priest that are?

I find I miscall'd that celestial splendour of the mist going off, a *sunset*. That only shews my inaccuracy of head.

Do pray indulge me by writing an answer to the point of time mentioned above, or *let Southey*. I am asham'd to go bargaining in this way, but indeed I have no time I can reckon on till the first week in October. God send I may not be disappointed in that!

Coleridge swore in letter to me he would review *Excursion* in the *Quarterly*. Therefore, tho' *that* shall not stop me, yet if I can do anything, *when* done, I must know of him if he has

anything ready, or I shall fill the world with loud exclams.

I keep writing on, knowing the postage is no more for much writing, else so fagg'd and disjointed I am with damn'd India House work, I scarce know what I do. My left arm reposes on *Excursion*. I feel what it would be in quiet. It is now a sealed book.

O happy Paris, seat of idleness and pleasure! From some return'd English I hear that not such a thing as a counting-house is to be seen in her streets, — scarce a desk. Earthquakes swallow up this mercantile city and its gripple merchants, as Drayton hath it, “born to be the curse of this brave isle.” I invoke this not on account of any parsimonious habits the mercantile interest may have, but, to confess truth, because I am not fit for an office.

Farewell, in haste, from a head that is ill to methodize, a stomach to digest, and all out of tune. Better harmonies await you!

C. LAMB

CCXXVII.—TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

October 20, 1814.

Dear S., — I have this day deposited with Mr. G. Bedford the essay you suggested to me. I am afraid it is wretchedly inadequate. Who can cram into a strait coop of a review any serious idea of such a vast and magnificent poem as *Excursion*?

I am myself, too, peculiarly unfit from constitutional causes and want of time. However, it is gone.

I have nine or ten days of my holydays left, but the rains are come.

Kind remembrances to Mrs. S. and sisters.

Yours truly, C. L.

CCXXVIII.—MARY LAMB TO BARBARA BETHAM (AGED 14)

November 2, 1814.

It is very long since I have met with such an agreeable surprise as the sight of your letter, my kind young friend, afforded me. Such a nice letter as it is too. And what a pretty hand you write. I congratulate you on this attainment with great pleasure, because I have so often felt the disadvantage of my own wretched handwriting.

You wish for London news. I rely upon your sister Ann for gratifying you in this respect, yet I have been endeavouring to recollect whom you might have seen here, and what may have happened to them since, and this effort has only brought the image of little Barbara Betham, unconnected with any other person, so strongly before my eyes that I seem as if I had no other subject to write upon. Now I think I see you with your feet propped upon the fender, your two hands spread out upon your knees — an atti-

tude you always chose when we were in familiar confidential conversation together — telling me long stories of your own home, where now you say you are “Moping on with the same thing every day,” and which then presented nothing but pleasant recollections to your mind. How well I remember your quiet steady face bent over your book. One day, conscience struck at having wasted so much of your precious time in reading, and feeling yourself, as you prettily said, “quite useless to me,” you went to my drawers and hunted out some unhemmed pocket-handkerchiefs, and by no means could I prevail upon you to resume your story books till you had hemmed them all. I remember, too, your teaching my little maid to read — your sitting with her a whole evening to console her for the death of her sister; and that she in her turn endeavoured to become a comforter to you, the next evening, when you wept at the sight of Mrs. Holcroft, from whose school you had recently eloped because you were not partial to sitting in the stocks. Those tears, and a few you once dropped when my brother teased you about your supposed fondness for an apple dumpling, were the only interruptions to the calm contentedness of your unclouded brow. We still remain the same as you left us, neither taller nor wiser, or perceptibly older, but three years must have made a great alteration in you. How very much, dear Barbara, I should like to see you!

We still live in Temple Lane, but I am now sitting in a room you never saw. Soon after you left us we were distressed by the cries of a cat, which seemed to proceed from the garrets adjoining to ours, and only separated from ours by a locked door on the farther side of my brother's bedroom, which you know was the little room at the top of the kitchen stairs. We had the lock forced and let poor puss out from behind a pannel of the wainscot, and she lived with us from that time, for we were in gratitude bound to keep her, as she had introduced us to four untenanted, unowned rooms, and by degrees we have taken possession of these unclaimed apartments — first putting up lines to dry our clothes, then moving my brother's bed into one of these, more commodious than his own room. And last winter, my brother being unable to pursue a work he had begun, owing to the kind interruptions of friends who were more at leisure than himself, I persuaded him that he might write at his ease in one of these rooms, as he could not then hear the door knock, or hear himself denied to be at home, which was sure to make him call out and convict the poor maid in a fib. Here, I said, he might be almost really not at home. So I put in an old grate, and made him a fire in the largest of these garrets, and carried in one table, and one chair, and bid him write away, and consider himself as much alone as if he were in a new lodging in the midst of

Salisbury Plain, or any other wide unfrequented place where he could expect few visitors to break in upon his solitude. I left him quite delighted with his new acquisition, but in a few hours he came down again with a sadly dismal face. He could do nothing, he said, with those bare white-washed walls before his eyes. He could not write in that dull unfurnished prison.

The next day, before he came home from his office, I had gathered up various bits of old carpeting to cover the floor; and, to a little break the blank look of the bare walls, I hung up a few old prints that used to ornament the kitchen, and after dinner, with great boast of what an improvement I had made, I took Charles once more into his new study. A week of busy labours followed, in which I think you would not have disliked to have been our assistant. My brother and I almost covered the walls with prints, for which purpose he cut out every print from every book in his old library, coming in every now and then to ask my leave to strip a fresh poor author — which he might not do, you know, without my permission, as I am elder sister. There was such pasting, such consultation where their portraits, and where the series of pictures from Ovid, Milton, and Shakespear would show to most advantage, and in what obscure corner authors of humbler note might be allowed to tell their stories. All the books gave up their stores but one, a translation from Ariosto, a deli-

cious set of four and twenty prints, and for which I had marked out a conspicuous place; when lo! we found at the moment the scissars were going to work that a part of the poem was printed at the back of every picture. What a cruel disappointment! To conclude this long story about nothing, the poor despised garret is now called the print room, and is become our most favourite sitting room.

Your sister Ann will tell you that your friend Louisa is going to France. Miss Skepper is out of town, Mrs. Reynolds desires to be remembered to you, and so does my neighbour Mrs. Norris, who was your doctress when you were unwell, her three little children are grown three big children. The Lions still live in Exeter Change. Returning home through the Strand, I often hear them roar about twelve o'clock at night. I never hear them without thinking of you, because you seemed so pleased with the sight of them, and said your young companions would stare when you told them you had seen a Lion.

And now, my dear Barbara, fare well, I have not written such a long letter a long time, but I am very sorry I had nothing amusing to write about. Wishing you may pass happily through the rest of your school days, and every future day of your life,

I remain, your affectionate Friend,

M. LAMB

My brother sends his love to you, with the kind remembrance your letter shewed you have of us as I was. He joins with me in respects to your good father and mother, and to your brother John, who, if I do not mistake his name, is your tall young brother who was in search of a fair lady with a large fortune. Ask him if he has found her yet. You say you are not so tall as Louisa—you must be, you cannot so degenerate from the rest of your family. Now you have begun, I shall hope to have the pleasure of hearing from [you] again. I shall always receive a letter from you with very great delight.

CCXXIX.— TO JOHN SCOTT

December 12, 1814.

Sir, — I am sorry to seem to go off my agreement, but very particular circumstances have happened to hinder my fulfilment of it at present. If any single essays ever occur to me in future, you shall have the refusal of them. Meantime I beg you to consider the thing as at an end.

Yours, with thanks and acknowledgment,
C. LAMB

CCXXX.— TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

December 28, 1814.

Dear W.,— Your experience about tailors seems to be in point blank opposition to Burton,

as much as the author of the *Excursion* does *toto coelo* differ in his notion of a country life from the picture which W. H. has exhibited of the same. But with a little explanation you and B. may be reconciled. It is evident that he confined his observations to the genuine native London tailor. What freaks tailor-nature may take in the country is not for him to give account of. And certainly some of the freaks recorded do give an idea of the persons in question being beside themselves, rather than in harmony with the common moderate self-enjoyment of the rest of mankind. A flying tailor, I venture to say, is no more *in rerum naturâ* than a flying horse or a gryphon. His wheeling his airy flight from the precipice you mention had a parallel in the melancholy Jew who toppled from the monument. Were his limbs ever found? Then, the man who cures diseases by words is evidently an inspired tailor. Burton never affirmed that the act of sewing disqualified the practiser of it from being a fit organ for supernatural revelation. He never enters into such subjects. 'T is the common uninspired tailor which he speaks of. Again the person who makes his smiles to be *heard*, is evidently a man under possession; a demoniac tailor. A greater hell than his own must have a hand in this. I am not certain that the cause which you advocate has much reason for triumph. You seem to me to substitute light-headedness for light-heartedness by a trick, or not to know the difference. I confess, a grin-

ning tailor would shock me. — Enough of tailors.

The “ ’scapes ” of the great god Pan who appeared among your mountains some dozen years since, and his narrow chance of being submerged by the swains, afforded me much pleasure. I can conceive the water-nymphs pulling for him. He would have been another Hylas. W. Hylas. In a mad letter which Capel Lofft wrote to *M[onthly Magazine]* Phillips (now Sir Richard) I remember his noticing a metaphysical article by Pan, signed H., and adding “ I take your correspondent to be the same with Hylas.” Hylas has put forth a pastoral just before. How near the unfounded conjecture of the certainly inspired Lofft (unfounded as we thought it) was to being realized! I can conceive him being “ good to all that wander in that perilous flood.” One J. Scott (I know no more) is editor of *Champion*. Where is Coleridge?

That review you speak of, I am only sorry it did not appear last month. The circumstances of haste and peculiar bad spirits under which it was written, would have excused its slightness and inadequacy, the full load of which I shall suffer from its lying by so long as it will seem to have done from its postponement. I write with great difficulty and can scarce command my own resolution to sit at writing an hour together. I am a poor creature, but I am leaving off gin. I hope you will see good-will in the thing. I had a diffi-

culty to perform not to make it all panegyrick ; I have attempted to personate a mere stranger to you ; perhaps with too much strangeness. But you must bear that in mind when you read it, and not think that I am in mind distant from you or your poem, but that both are close to me among the nearest of persons and things. I do but act the stranger in the review. Then I was puzzled about extracts and determined upon not giving one that had been in the *Examiner*, for extracts repeated give an idea that there is a meagre allowance of good things. By this way, I deprived myself of Sir Alfred Irthing and the reflections that conclude his story, which are the flower of the poem. H. had given the reflections before me. *Then* it is the first review I ever did, and I did not know how long I might make it. But it must speak for itself, if Gifford and his crew do not put words in its mouth, which I expect.

Farewell. Love to all. Mary keeps very bad.

C. LAMB

CCXXXI.—TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Early January, 1815.

Dear Wordsworth, — I told you my review was a very imperfect one. But what you will see in the *Quarterly* is a spurious one which Mr. Baviad Gifford has palm'd upon it for mine. I never felt more vex'd in my life than when I read it. I cannot give you an idea of what he

has done to it out of spite at me because he once suffer'd me to be called a lunatic in his Thing. The *language* he has alter'd throughout. Whatever inadequateness it had to its subject, it was in point of composition the prettiest piece of prose I ever writ, and so my sister (to whom alone I read the MS.) said. That charm if it had any is all gone: more than a third of the substance is cut away, and that not all from one place, but *passim*, so as to make utter nonsense. Every warm expression is changed for a nasty cold one. I have not the cursed alteration by me, I shall never look at it again, but for a specimen I remember I had said the poet of the *Excursion* "walks thro' common forests as thro' some Dodona or enchanted wood, and every casual bird that flits upon the boughs, like that miraculous one in Tasso, but in language more piercing than any articulate sounds, reveals to him far higher lovelays." It is now (besides half a dozen alterations in the same half dozen lines) "but in language more *intelligent* reveals to him" — that is one I remember. But that would have been little, putting his damn'd shoemaker phraseology (for he was a shoemaker) instead of mine, which has been tinctured with better authors than his ignorance can comprehend — for I reckon myself a dab at *prose* — verse I leave to my betters — God help them, if they are to be so reviewed by friend and foe as you have been this quarter.

I have read "It won't do." But worse than

altering words, he has kept a few members only of the part I had done best, which was to explain all I could of your "scheme of harmonies," as I had ventured to call it, between the external universe and what within us answers to it. To do this I had accumulated a good many short passages, rising in length to the end, weaving in the extracts as if they came in as a part of the text, naturally, not obtruding them as specimens. Of this part a little is left, but so as without conjuration no man could tell what I was driving at. A proof of it you may see (tho' not judge of the whole of the injustice) by these words: I had spoken something about "natural methodism," and after follows, "and therefore the tale of Margaret should have been postponed" (I forget my words, or his words): now the reasons for postponing it are as deducible from what goes before, as they are from the 104th Psalm. The passage whence I deduced it has vanished, but clapping a colon before a *therefore* is always reason enough for Mr. Baviad Gifford to allow to a reviewer that is not himself.

I assure you my complaints are founded. I know how sore a word alter'd makes one, but indeed of this review the whole complexion is gone. I regret only that I did not keep a copy, I am sure you would have been pleased with it, because I have been feeding my fancy for some months with the notion of pleasing you. Its imperfection or inadequateness in size and method

I knew, but for the *writing part* of it I was fully satisfied. I hoped it would make more than atonement. Ten or twelve distinct passages come to my mind, which are gone, and what is left is of course the worse for their having been there; the eyes are pull'd out and the bleeding sockets are left. I read it at Arch's shop with my face burning with vexation secretly, with just such a feeling as if it had been a review written against myself, making false quotations from me. But I am asham'd to say so much about a short piece. How are *you* served! and the labours of years turn'd into contempt by scoundrels.

But I could not but protest against your taking that thing as mine. Every *pretty* expression (I know there were many), every warm expression, there was nothing else, is vulgarised and frozen — but if they catch me in their camps again let them spitchcock me. They had a right to do it, as no name appears to it, and Mr. Shoemaker Gifford I suppose never waived a right he had since he commenc'd author. God confound him and all caitiffs.

C. L.

CCXXXII. — TO MR. SARGUS

February 23, 1815.

Dear Sargus, — This is to give you notice that I have parted with the cottage to Mr. Grig, Jr., to whom you will pay rent from Michaelmas last. The rent that was due at Michaelmas I do

not wish you to pay me. I forgive it you as you may have been at some expenses in repairs.

Yours, CH. LAMB

CCXXXIII.— TO JOSEPH HUME

“Bis dat qui dat cito.”

I hate the pedantry of expressing that in another language which we have sufficient terms for in our own. So in plain English I very much wish you to give your vote to-morrow at Clerkenwell, instead of Saturday. It would clear up the brows of my favourite candidate, and stagger the hands of the opposite party. It commences at nine. How easy, as you come from Kensington (*apropos*, how is your excellent family?) to turn down Bloomsbury, through Leather Lane (avoiding Lay Stall Street for the disagreeableness of the name). Why, it brings you in four minutes and a half to the spot renowned on northern milestones, “where Hicks’ Hall formerly stood.” There will be good cheer ready for every independent freeholder; where you see a green flag hang out go boldly in, call for ham, or beef, or what you please, and a mug of Meux’s Best. How much more gentleman-like to come in the front of the battle, openly avowing one’s sentiments, than to lag in on the last day, when the adversary is dejected, spiritless, laid low. Have the first cut at them. By Saturday you’ll cut into the mutton. I’d go cheerfully myself, but I am no free-

holder (*Fuimus Troes, fuit Ilium*), but I sold it for £50. If they'd accept a copy-holder, we clerks are naturally *copy*-holders.

By the way, get Mrs. Hume, or that agreeable Amelia or Caroline, to stick a bit of green in your hat. Nothing daunts the adversary more than to wear the colours of your party. Stick it in cockade-like. It has a martial and by no means disagreeable effect.

Go, my dear freeholder, and if any chance calls you out of this transitory scene earlier than expected, the coroner shall sit lightly on your corpse. He shall not too anxiously inquire into the circumstances of blood found upon your razor. That might happen to any gentleman in shaving. Nor into your having been heard to express a contempt of life, or for scolding Louisa for what Julia did, and other trifling incoherencies.

Yours sincerely,

C. LAMB

CCXXXIV.—TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

April 7, 1815.

The conclusion of this epistle getting gloomy, I have chosen this part to desire *our* kindest loves to Mrs. Wordsworth and to *Dorothea*. Will none of you ever be in London again?

Dear Wordsworth, — You have made me very proud with your successive book presents. I have been carefully through the two volumes to see that nothing was omitted which used to be there.

I think I miss nothing but a character in anti-thetic manner which I do not know why you left out; the moral to the boys building the giant, the omission whereof leaves it in my mind less complete; and one admirable line gone (or something come instead of it) "the stone-chat and the glancing sand-piper," which was a line quite alive. I demand these at your hand.

I am glad that you have not sacrificed a verse to those scoundrels. I would not have had you offer up the poorest rag that lingered upon the stript shoulders of little Alice Fell, to have atoned all their malice. I would not have given 'em a red cloak to save their souls. I am afraid lest that substitution of a shell (a flat falsification of the history) for the household implement as it stood at first, was a kind of tub thrown out to the beast, or rather thrown out for him. The tub was a good honest tub in its place, and nothing could fairly be said against it. You say you made the alteration for the "friendly reader," but the malicious will take it to himself. Damn 'em; if you give 'em an inch, &c. The preface is noble, and such as you should write. I wish I could set my name to it, *Imprimatur*, — but you have set it there yourself, and I thank you. I had rather be a door-keeper in your margin, than have their proudest textswelling with my eulogies. The poems in the volumes which are new to me are so much in the old tone that I hardly received them as novelties.

Of those of which I had no previous know-

ledge, the *Four Yew Trees* and the mysterious company which you have assembled there, most struck me — *Death the Skeleton and Time the Shadow*. It is a sight not for every youthful poet to dream of; it is one of the last results he must have gone thinking-on for years for. *Laodamia* is a very original poem; I mean original with reference to your own manner. You have nothing like it. I should have seen it in a strange place, and greatly admired it, but not suspected its derivation.

Let me in this place, for I have writ you several letters without naming it, mention that my brother, who is a picture-collector, has picked up an undoubtable picture of Milton. He gave a few shillings for it, and could get no history with it but that some old lady had had it for a great many years. Its age is ascertainable from the state of the canvas, and you need only see it to be sure that it is the original of the heads in the Tonson editions, with which we are all so well familiar. Since I saw you I have had a treat in the reading way which comes not every day, the Latin Poems of V. Bourne, which were quite new to me. What a heart that man had, all laid out upon town scenes, a proper counterpoise to *some people's* rural extravaganzas. Why I mention him is that your *Power of Music* reminded me of his poem of *The Ballad Singer in the Seven Dials*. Do you remember his epigram on the old woman who taught Newton the A B C,

which, after all, he says, he hesitates not to call Newton's *Principia*. I was lately fatiguing myself with going thro' a volume of fine words by Lord Thurlow; excellent words, and if the heart could live by words alone, it could desire no better regale; but what an aching vacuum of matter; I don't stick at the madness of it, for that is only a consequence of shutting his eyes and thinking he is in the age of the old Elizabeth poets. From thence I turned to V. Bourne. What a sweet unpretending pretty-mannered *matter-ful* creature, sucking from every flower, making a flower of everything, his diction all Latin, and his thoughts all English. Bless him! Latin was n't good enough for him, why was n't he content with the language which Gay and Prior wrote in?

I am almost sorry that you printed extracts from those first poems, or that you did not print them at length. They do not read to me as they do all together. Besides, they have diminished the value of the original (which I possess) as a curiosity. I have hitherto kept them distinct in my mind as referring to a particular period of your life. All the rest of your poems are so much of a piece, they might have been written in the same week; these decidedly speak of an earlier period. They tell more of what you had been reading.

We were glad to see the poems "by a female friend." The one of the Wind is masterly, but

not new to us. Being only three, perhaps you might have clapt a D. at the corner, and let it have past as a printer's mark to the uninitiated, as a delightful hint to the better instructed. As it is, expect a formal criticism on the poems of your female friend, and she must expect it.

I should have written before, but I am cruelly engaged and like to be. On Friday I was at office from ten in the morning (two hours dinner except) to eleven at night; last night till nine. My business and office business in general has increased so. I don't mean I am there every night, but I must expect a great deal of it. I never leave till four, and do not keep a holyday now once in ten times, where I used to keep all red-letter days, and some fine days besides, which I used to dub Nature's holydays. I have had my day. I had formerly little to do. So of the little that is left of life I may reckon two-thirds as dead, for Time that a man may call his own is his Life; and hard work and thinking about it taints even the leisure hours, — stains Sunday with workday contemplations. This is Sunday, and the headache I have is part late hours at work the two preceding nights, and part later hours over a consoling pipe afterwards. But I find stupid acquiescence coming over me. I bend to the yoke, and it is almost with me and my household as with the man and his consort, —

To them each evening had its glittering star,
And every Sabbath day its golden sun —

to such straits am I driven for the life of life,
Time! O that from that superfluity of holyday
leisure my youth wasted, —

Age might but take some hours youth wanted not!

N. B. I have left off spirituous liquors for four
or more months, with a moral certainty of its
lasting. Farewell, dear Wordsworth!

CCXXXV.—TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

April 28, 1815.

Dear Wordsworth,—The more I read of your
two last volumes, the more I feel it necessary to
make my acknowledgments for them in more
than one short letter. The *Night Piece* to which
you refer me I meant fully to have noticed; but
the fact is, I come so fluttering and languid from
business, tired with thoughts of it, frightened
with fears of it, that when I get a few minutes
to sit down to scribble (an action of the hand
now seldom natural to me — I mean voluntary
pen-work) I lose all presential memory of what
I had intended to say, and say what I can, talk
about Vincent Bourne, or any casual image, in-
stead of that which I had meditated — by the
way, I must look out V. B. for you. So I had
meant to have mentioned *Yarrow Visited*, with
that stanza, “But thou that didst appear so fair;”
than which I think no lovelier stanza can be
found in the wide world of poetry; — yet the

poem, on the whole, seems condemned to leave behind it a melancholy of imperfect satisfaction, as if you had wronged the feeling with which, in what preceded it, you had resolved never to visit it, and as if the Muse had determined in the most delicate manner to make you, and *scarce make you*, feel it. Else, it is far superior to the other, which has but one exquisite verse in it, the last but one, or the two last: this is all fine, except perhaps that *that* of "studious ease and generous cares" has a little tinge of the *less romantic* about it.

The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale is a charming counterpart to *Poor Susan*, with the addition of that delicacy towards aberrations from the strict path, which is so fine in the *Old Thief and the Boy by his Side*, which always brings water into my eyes. Perhaps it is the worse for being a repetition. *Susan* stood for the representative of poor *rus in urbe*. There was quite enough to stamp the moral of the thing never to be forgotten. "Fast volumes of vapour," &c. The last verse of *Susan* was to be got rid of at all events. It threw a kind of dubiety upon Susan's moral conduct. Susan is a servant-maid. I see her trundling her mop, and contemplating the whirling phenomenon thro' blurred optics; but to term her "a poor outcast" seems as much as to say that poor Susan was no better than she should be, which I trust was not what you meant to express.

Robin Goodfellow supports himself without

that *stick* of a moral which you have thrown away; but how I can be brought in *felo de omittendo* for that ending to the *Boy-builders* is a mystery. I can't say positively now — I only know that no line oftener or readier occurs than that "Light-hearted boys, I will build up a giant with you." It comes naturally with a warm holyday and the freshness of the blood. It is a perfect summer amulet that I tie round my legs to quicken their motion when I go out a-Maying. (N. B.) I don't often go out a-maying. *Must* is the tense with me now. Do you take the pun?

Young Romilly is divine, the reasons of his mother's grief being remediless. I never saw parental love carried up so high, towering above the other loves. Shakspeare had done something for the filial in Cordelia, and by implication for the fatherly, too, in Lear's resentment; he left it for you to explore the depths of the maternal heart. I get stupid and flat and flattering: what's the use of telling you what good things you have written, or — I hope I may add — that I know them to be good. Apropos — when I first opened upon the just-mentioned poem, in a careless tone I said to Mary as if putting a riddle "What is good for a bootless bean?" to which with infinite presence of mind (as the jest book has it) she answered, a "shoeless pea." It was the first joke she ever made. Joke the second I make. You distinguish well in your old preface between the verses of Dr. Johnson of the *Man in the Strand*,

and that from *The Babes in the Wood*. I was thinking whether taking your own glorious lines, —

And from the love which was in her soul
For her youthful Romilly,

which, by the love I bear my own soul, I think have no parallel in any of the best old ballads, and just altering it to —

And from the great respect she felt
For Sir Samuel Romilly,

would not have explained the boundaries of prose expression and poetic feeling nearly as well. Excuse my levity on such an occasion. I never felt deeply in my life, if that poem did not make me, both lately and when I read it in MS. No alderman ever longed after a haunch of buck venison more than I for a spiritual taste of that *White Doe* you promise. I am sure it is superlative, or will be when *drest, i. e.* printed. All things read raw to me in MS. ; to compare *magna parvis*, I cannot endure my own writings in that state. The only one which I think would not very much win upon me in print is *Peter Bell*. But I am not certain.

You ask me about your preface. I like both that and the supplement without an exception. The account of what you mean by imagination is very valuable to me. It will help me to like some things in poetry better, which is a little humiliating in me to confess. I thought I could not be instructed in that science (I mean the critical), as I once heard old obscene, beastly Peter

Pindar, in a dispute on Milton, say he thought that if he had reason to value himself upon one thing more than another, it was in knowing what good verse was. Who look'd over your proof-sheets, and left *ordebo* in that line of Virgil?

My brother's picture of Milton is very finely painted; that is, it might have been done by a hand next to Vandyke's. It is the genuine Milton, and an object of quiet gaze for the half-hour at a time. *Yet* tho' I am confident there is no better one of him, the face does not quite answer to Milton. There is a tinge of *petit* (or *petite*, how do you spell it) querulousness about. Yet hang it, now I remember better, there is not: it is calm, melancholy, and poetical.

One of the copies you sent had precisely the same pleasant blending of a sheet of second volume with a sheet of first. I think it was page 245; but I sent it and had it rectified. It gave me in the first impetus of cutting the leaves, just such a cold squelch as going down a plausible turning and suddenly reading "no thoroughfare." Robinson's is entire; he is gone to bury his father.

I wish you would write more criticism about Spenser, &c. I think I could say something about him myself; but Lord bless me! these "merchants and their spicy drugs" which are so harmonious to sing of, they lime-twigg up my poor soul and body, till I shall forget I ever thought myself a bit of a genius! I can't even put a few

thoughts on paper for a newspaper. I “engross,” when I should pen a paragraph. Confusion blast all mercantile transactions, all traffic, exchange of commodities, intercourse between nations, all the consequent civilization and wealth and amity and link of society, and getting rid of prejudices, and knowledge of the face of the globe; and rot the very firs of the forest, that look so romantic alive, and die into desks. *Vale.*

Yours, dear W., and all yours, C. LAMB

Excuse this maddish letter: I am too tired to write *in forma*.

N. B. Don't read that *Q. Review* — I will never look into another.

CCXXXVI. — TO MISS MATILDA
BETHAM

[No date.]

Dear Miss B., — Mr. Hunter has this morning put into a parcel *all I have received from you* at various times, including a sheet of notes from the printer and two fair sheets of Mary [*The Lay of Marie*]. I hope you will receive them safe. The poem I will continue to look over, but must request you to provide for the rest. I cannot attend to anything but the most simple things. I am very much unhinged indeed. Tell K. I saw Mrs. J. yesterday and she was well. You must write to Hunter if you are in a hurry for the notes, &c.

Yours sincerely, C. LAMB

CCXXXVII. — TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

London, May 6, 1815.

Dear Southey, — I have received from Longman a copy of *Roderick*, with the author's compliments, for which I much thank you. I don't know where I shall put all the noble presents I have lately received in that way; the *Excursion*, Wordsworth's two last volumes and now *Roderick*, have come pouring in upon me like some irruption from Helicon. The story of the brave Maccabee was already, you may be sure, familiar to me in all its parts. I have, since the receipt of your present, read it quite through again, and with no diminished pleasure. I don't know whether I ought to say that it has given me more pleasure than any of your long poems. *Kebama* is doubtless more powerful, but I don't feel that firm footing in it that I do in *Roderick*; my imagination goes sinking and floundering in the vast spaces of unopened-before systems and faiths; I am put out of the pale of my old sympathies; my moral sense is almost outraged; I can't believe, or with horror am made to believe, such desperate chances against omnipotences, such disturbances of faith to the centre. The more potent the more painful the spell. Jove and his brotherhood of gods, tottering with the giant assailings, I can bear, for the soul's hopes are not struck at in such contests; but your Oriental almighties are too much types of the intangible

prototype to be meddled with without shuddering. One never connects what are called the attributes with Jupiter. I mention only what diminishes my delight at the wonder-workings of *Kebama*, not what impeaches its power, which I confess with trembling.

But *Roderick* is a comfortable poem. It reminds me of the delight I took in the first reading of the *Joan of Arc*. It is maturer and better than *that*, though not better to me now than that was then. It suits me better than *Madoc*. I am at home in Spain and Christendom. I have a timid imagination; I am afraid. I do not willingly admit of strange beliefs or out-of-the-way creeds or places. I never read books of travel, at least not farther than Paris or Rome. I can just endure Moors, because of their connection as foes with Christians; but Abyssinians, Ethiops, Esquimaux, Dervises, and all that tribe, I hate. I believe I fear them in some manner. A Mahometan turban on the stage, though enveloping some well-known face (Mr. Cook or Mr. Maddox, whom I see another day good Christian and English waiters, innkeepers, &c.), does not give me pleasure unalloyed. I am a Christian, Englishman, Londoner, *Templar*. God help me when I come to put off these snug relations, and to get abroad into the world to come! I shall be like *the crow on the sand*, as Wordsworth has it; but I won't think on it — no need, I hope, yet.

The parts I have been most pleased with, both on first and second readings, perhaps, are Florinda's palliation of Roderick's crime, confessed to him in his disguise — the retreat of Palayo's family first discovered, — his being made king — “For acclamation one form must serve, *more solemn for the breach of old observances.*” Roderick's vow is extremely fine, and his blessing on the vow of Alphonso, —

Towards the troop he spread his arms,
And carried to all spirits *with the act*,
As if the expanded soul diffused itself,
Its affluent inspiration.

It struck me forcibly that the feeling of these last lines might have been suggested to you by the cartoon of Paul at Athens. Certain it is that a better motto or guide to that famous attitude can nowhere be found. I shall adopt it as explanatory of that violent but dignified motion.

I must read again Landor's *Julian*. I have not read it some time. I think he must have failed in Roderick, for I remember nothing of him, nor of any distinct character as a character — only fine-sounding passages. I remember thinking also he had chosen a point of time after the event, as it were, for Roderick survives to no use; but my memory is weak, and I will not wrong a fine poem by trusting to it.

The notes to your poem I have not read again; but it will be a take-downable book on my shelf, and they will serve sometimes at breakfast, or

times too light for the text to be duly appreciated. Though some of 'em, one of the serpent Penance, is serious enough, now I think on't.

Of Coleridge I hear nothing, nor of the Morgans. I hope to have him like a re-appearing star, standing up before me some time when least expected in London, as has been the case whilere.

I am *doing* nothing (as the phrase is) but reading presents, and walk away what of the day-hours I can get from hard occupation. Pray accept once more my hearty thanks, and expression of pleasure for your remembrance of me. My sister desires her kind respects to Mrs. S. and to all at Keswick.

Yours truly, C. LAMB

The next Present I look for is the *White Doe*. Have you seen Matilda Betham's *Lay of Marie*? I think it very delicately pretty as to sentiment, &c.

CCXXXVIII. — TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

August 9, 1815.

Dear Southey, — Robinson is not on the circuit, as I erroneously stated in a letter to W. W., which travels with this, but is gone to Brussels, Ostend, Ghent, &c. But his friends the Colliers, whom I consulted respecting your friend's fate, remember to have heard him say that Father

Pardo had effected his escape (the cunning greasy rogue), and to the best of their belief is at present in Paris. To my thinking, it is a small matter whether there be one fat friar more or less in the world. I have rather a taste for clerical executions, imbibed from early recollections of the fate of the excellent Dodd. I hear Buonaparte has sued his *habeas corpus*, and the twelve judges are now sitting upon it at the Rolls.

Your *boute-feu* (bonfire) must be excellent of its kind. Poet Settle presided at the last great thing of the kind in London, when the pope was burnt in form. Do you provide any verses on this occasion? Your fear for Hartley's intellectuals is just and rational. Could not the Chancellor be petitioned to remove him? His lordship took Mr. Betty from under the paternal wing. I think at least he should go through a course of matter-of-fact with some sober man after the mysteries. Could not he spend a week at Poole's before he goes back to Oxford? Tobin is dead. But there is a man in my office, a Mr. Hedges, who proses it away from morning to night, and never gets beyond corporal and material verities. He'd get these crack-brain metaphysics out of the young gentleman's head as soon as any one I know. When I can't sleep o' nights, I imagine a dialogue with Mr. H. upon any given subject, and go prosing on in fancy with him, till I either laugh or fall asleep. I have literally found it answer. I am going to stand godfather; I don't

like the business; I cannot muster up decorum for these occasions; I shall certainly disgrace the font. I was at Hazlitt's marriage, and had like to have been turned out several times during the ceremony. Anything awful makes me laugh. I misbehaved once at a funeral. Yet I can read about these ceremonies with pious and proper feelings. The realities of life only seem the mockeries. I fear I must get cured along with Hartley, if not too inveterate. Don't you think Louis the Desirable is in a sort of quandary?

After all, Buonaparte is a fine fellow, as my barber says, and I should not mind standing bare-headed at his table to do him service in his fall. They should have given him Hampton Court or Kensington, with a tether extending forty miles round London. Qu. Would not the people have ejected the Brunswicks some day in his favour? Well, we shall see.

C. LAMB

CCXXXIX.—TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

August 9, 1815.

Dear Wordsworth, — We acknowledge with pride the receipt of both your handwritings, and desire to be ever had in kindly remembrance by you both and by Dorothy. Miss Hutchinson has just transmitted us a letter containing, among other cheerful matter, the annunciation of a child born. Nothing of consequence has turned up in our parts since your departure. Mary and I felt

quite queer after your taking leave (you W. W.) of us in St. Giles's. We wish'd we had seen more of you, but felt we had scarce been sufficiently acknowledging for the share we had enjoyed of your company. We felt as if we had been not enough *expressive* of our pleasure. But our manners *both* are a little too much on this side of too-much-cordiality. We want presence of mind and presence of heart. What we feel comes too late, like an afterthought impromptu. But perhaps you observed nothing of that which we have been painfully conscious of, and are, every day, in our intercourse with those we stand affected to through all the degrees of love.

Robinson is on the circuit. Our panegyrist I thought had forgotten one of the objects of his youthful admiration, but I was agreeably removed from that scruple by the laundress knocking at my door this morning almost before I was up, with a present of fruit from my young friend, &c. — There is something inexpressibly pleasant to me in these *presents*. Be it fruit, or fowl, or brawn, or *what not*. *Books* are a legitimate cause of acceptance. If presents be not the soul of friendship, undoubtedly they are the most spiritual part of the body of that intercourse. There is too much narrowness of thinking in this point. The punctilio of acceptance methinks is too confined and straitlaced. I could be content to receive money, or clothes, or a joint of meat from a friend; why should he not send me a dinner

as well as a desert? I would taste him in the beasts of the field, and thro' all creation. Therefore did the basket of fruit of the juvenile Talfourd not displease me. Not that I have any thoughts of bartering or reciprocating these things. To send him anything in return would be to reflect suspicion of mercenariness upon what I knew he meant a freewill offering. Let him overcome me in bounty. In this strife a generous nature loves to be overcome.

Alsager (whom you call Alsinger — and indeed he is rather *singer* than *sager*, no reflection upon his naturals neither) is well and in harmony with himself and the world. I don't know how he and those of his constitution keep their nerves so nicely balanced as they do. Or have they any? or are they made of packthread? He is proof against weather, ingratitude, meat underdone, every weapon of fate. I have just now a jagged end of a tooth pricking against my tongue, which meets it halfway in a wantonness of provocation, and there they go at it, the tongue pricking itself like the viper against the file, and the tooth galling all the gum inside and out to torture, tongue and tooth, tooth and tongue, hard at it, and I to pay the reckoning, till all my mouth is as brimstone, and I'd venture the roof of my mouth that at this moment, at which I conjecture my full-happinessed friend is picking his crackers, not one of the double rows of ivory in his privileged mouth has as much as a flaw in it, but all per-

form their functions, and having performed it, expect to be picked (luxurious steeds!) and rubbed down. I don't think he could be robbed, or could have his house set on fire, or ever want money. I have heard him express a similar opinion of his own impassibility.

I keep acting here Heautontimorumenos. M. Burney has been to Calais and has come home a travell'd Monsieur. He speaks nothing but the Gallic idiom. Field is on circuit. So now I believe I have given account of most that you saw at our cabin. Have you seen a curious letter in *Morning Chronicle*, by C[apel] L[offt], the genius of absurdity, respecting Bonaparte's suing out his *habeas corpus*. That man is his own moon. He has no need of ascending into that gentle planet for mild influences. You wish me some of your leisure. I have a glimmering aspect, a chink-light of liberty before me, which I pray God may prove not fallacious. My remonstrances have stirred up others to remonstrate, and altogether, there is a plan for separating certain parts of business from our department, which if it take place will produce me more time, *i. e.* my evenings free. It may be a means of placing me in a more conspicuous situation which will knock at my nerves another way, but I wait the issue in submission. If I can but begin my own day at four o'clock in the afternoon, I shall think myself to have Eden days of peace and liberty to what I have had.

As you say, how a man can fill three volumes up with an essay on the drama is wonderful. I am sure a very few sheets would hold all I had to say on the subject. Did you ever read Charron *On Wisdom?* or Patrick's *Pilgrim?* if neither, you have two great pleasures to come. I mean some day to attack Caryl *On Job*, six folios. What any man can write, surely I may read. If I do but get rid of auditing warehousekeepers' accounts and get no worse-harassing task in the place of it, what a lord of liberty I shall be. I shall dance and skip, and make mouths at the invisible event, and pick the thorns out of my pillow, and throw 'em at rich men's nightcaps, and talk blank verse, hoity-toity, and sing "A clerk I was in London gay," "Ban, ban, Ca-Caliban," like the emancipated monster, and go where I like, up this street or down that ally. Adieu, and pray that it may be my luck. Good be to you all. C. LAMB

CCXL.—MARY AND CHARLES LAMB TO
SARAH HUTCHINSON

August 20, 1815.

My dear friend, — I am going to do a queer thing. I have wearied myself with writing a long letter to Mrs. Morgan, a part of which is an incoherent, rambling account of a jaunt we have just been taking. I want to tell you all about it, for we so seldom do such things that it runs strangely in my head, and I feel too tired to give you other

than the mere copy of the nonsense I have just been writing.

“ Last Saturday was the grand feast day of the India House clerks. I think you must have heard Charles talk of his yearly turtle feast. He has been lately much wearied with work, and, glad to get rid of all connected with it, he *used* Saturday, the feast day being a holiday, *borrowed* the Monday following, and we set off on the outside of the Cambridge coach from Fetter Lane at eight o'clock, and were driven into Cambridge in great triumph by hell-fire Dick five minutes before three. Richard is in high reputation, he is private tutor to the Whip Club. Journeys used to be tedious torments to me, but seated out in the open air I enjoyed every mile of the way; the first twenty miles was particularly pleasing to me, having been accustomed to go so far on that road in the Ware stage-coach to visit my grandmother in the days of other times.

“ In my life I never spent so many pleasant hours together as I did at Cambridge. We were walking the whole time — out of one college into another. If you ask me which I like best I must make the children's traditionary unoffending reply to all curious inquirers — ‘*Both.*’ I liked them all best. The little gloomy ones, because they were little gloomy ones. I felt as if I could live and die in them and never wish to speak again. And the fine grand Trinity College, oh how fine it was ! And King's College Chapel,

what a place! I heard the Cathedral service there, and having been no great church-goer of late years, *that* and the painted windows and the general effect of the whole thing affected me wonderfully.

“ I certainly like St. John’s College best. I had seen least of it, having only been over it once, so, on the morning we returned, I got up at six o’clock and wandered into it by myself — by myself indeed, for there was nothing alive to be seen but one cat, who followed me about like a dog. Then I went over Trinity, but nothing hailed me there, not even a cat.

“ On the Sunday we met with a pleasant thing. We had been congratulating each other that we had come alone to enjoy, as the miser his feast, all our sights greedily to ourselves, but having seen all we began to grow flat and wish for this and t’other body with us, when we were accosted by a young gownsman whose face we knew, but where or how we had seen him we could not tell, and were obliged to ask his name. He proved to be a young man we had seen twice at Alsager’s. He turned out a very pleasant fellow — shewed us the insides of places; we took him to our inn to dinner, and drank tea with him in such a delicious college room, and then again he supped with us. We made our meals as short as possible, to lose no time, and walked our young conductor almost off his legs. Even when the fried eels were ready for supper and coming up, having a mess-

age from a man whom we had bribed for the purpose, that then we might see Oliver Cromwell, who was *not at home* when we called to see him, we sallied out again and made him a visit by candlelight ; and so ended our sights. When we were setting out in the morning our new friend came to bid us good-bye, and rode with us as far as Trompington. I never saw a creature so happy as he was the whole time he was with us, he said we had put him in such good spirits that [he] should certainly pass an examination well that he is to go through in six weeks, in order to qualify himself to obtain a fellowship.

“Returning home down old Fetter Lane I could hardly keep from crying to think it was all over. With what pleasure [Charles] shewed me Jesus College where Coleridge was, the barbe[r’s shop] where Manning was, the house where Lloyd lived, Franklin’s rooms, a young school-fellow with whom Charles was the first time he went to Cambridge: I peeped in at his window ; the room looked quite deserted, old chairs standing about in disorder that seemed to have stood there ever since they had sate in them. I write sad nonsense about these things ; but I wish you had heard Charles talk his nonsense over and over again about his visit to Franklin, and how he then first felt himself commencing gentleman and had eggs for his breakfast.” Charles Lamb commencing gentleman !

A lady who is sitting by me, seeing what I am

doing, says I remind her of her husband, who acknowledged that the first love letter he wrote to her was a copy of one he had made use of on a former occasion.

This is no letter, but if you give me any encouragement to write again you shall have one entirely to yourself: a little encouragement will do, a few lines to say you are well and remember us. I will keep this to-morrow, maybe Charles will put a few lines to it; I always send off a humdrum letter of mine with great satisfaction if I can get him to freshen it up a little at the end. Let me beg my love to your sister Johanna with many thanks. I have much pleasure in looking forward to her nice bacon, the maker of which I long have had a great desire to see.

God bless you, my dear Miss Hutchinson, I remain ever

Your affectionate friend, M. LAMB

[*Charles Lamb adds:*]

Dear Miss Hutchinson, — I subscribe most willingly to all my sister says of her enjoyment at Cambridge. She was in silent raptures all the while *there*, and came home riding thro' the air (her first long outside journey) triumphing as if she had been *graduated*. I remember one foolish-pretty expression she made use of, "Bless the little churches, how pretty they are!" as those symbols of civilized life opened upon her view one after the other on this side Cambridge. You cannot

proceed a mile without starting a steeple, with its little patch of villagery round it, enverduring the waste. I don't know how you will pardon part of her letter being a transcript, but writing to another lady first (probably as the *easiest task*¹) it was unnatural not to give you an account of what had so freshly delighted her, and would have been a piece of transcendant rhetorick (above her modesty) to have given two different accounts of a simple and univocal pleasure. Bless me how learned I write! but I always forget myself when I write to ladies. One cannot tame one's erudition down to their merely English apprehensions. But this and all other faults you will excuse from yours truly,

C. LAMB

Our kindest loves to Joanna, if she will accept it from us who are merely nominal to her, and to the child and child's parent. Yours again,

C. L.

[*Mary Lamb adds this footnote :*]

'“ *Easiest task.*” Not the true reason, but Charles had so connected Coleridge and Cambridge in my mind, by talking so much of him there, and a letter coming so fresh from *him*, in a manner *that was the reason* I wrote to them first. I make this apology perhaps quite unnecessarily, but I am of a very jealous temper myself, and more than once recollect having been offended at seeing kind expressions which had particularly

pleased me in a friend's letter repeated word for word to another. Farewell once more.

CCXLI.—MARY LAMB TO MATILDA
BETHAM

[? 1815.]

My dear Miss Betham;— My brother and myself return you a thousand thanks for your kind communication. We have read your poem many times over with increased interest, and very much wish to see you to tell you how highly we have been pleased with it. May we beg one favour? — I keep the manuscript in the hope that you will grant it. It is that, either now or when the whole poem is completed you will read it over with us. When I say with *us*, of course I mean Charles. I know that you have many judicious friends, but I have so often known my brother spy out errors in a manuscript which has passed through many judicious hands, that I shall not be easy if you do not permit him to look yours carefully through with you; and also you *must* allow him to correct the press for you.

If I knew where to find you I would call upon you. Should you feel nervous at the idea of meeting Charles in the capacity of a *severe censor*, give me a line, and I will come to you anywhere, and convince you in five minutes that he is even timid, stammers, and can scarcely speak for modesty and fear of giving pain when he finds himself placed in that kind of office. Shall

I appoint a time to see you here when he is from home? I will send him out any time you will name; indeed, I am always naturally alone till four o'clock. If you are nervous about coming, remember I am equally so about the liberty I have taken, and shall be till we meet and laugh off our mutual fears.

Yours most affectionately, M. LAMB

CCXLII.—TO MATILDA BETHAM

September 30, 1815.

Dear Miss Betham, — Your letter has found me in such a distress'd state of mind, owing partly to my situation at home and partly to perplexities at my office, that I am constrain'd to relinquish any further revision of *Marie*.

The blunders I have already overlooked have weighed upon me almost insufferably. I have sent the printer your copy so far as it is clear to 106 page. "Happiness too great for me" is the last line of that page. The rest, which I am not in any power to look over, being wretchedly ill, I send you back. I never was more ashamed of anything, but my head has a weight in it that forces me to give it up. Pray forgive me and write to the printer where you would have it sent in future. Yours truly, C. LAMB

I have return'd the printer all the copy of the first sheets.

I have alt'd that line to

That magic laugh bespeaks thee prest (?)

You had better consult Rogers about the *expense* of reprinting that sheet. An erratum there must be about *kill*.

CCXLIII. — TO MATILDA BETHAM

Dear Miss Betham, — All this while I have been tormenting myself with the thought of having been ungracious to you, and you have been all the while accusing yourself. Let us absolve one another, and be quits. My head is in such a state from incapacity for business that I certainly know it to be my duty not to undertake the veriest trifle in addition. I hardly know how I can go on. I have tried to get some redress by explaining my health, but with no great success. No one can tell how ill I am, because it does not come out to the exterior of my face, but lies in my scull deep and invisible. I wish I was leprous and black jaundiced skin-over, and that all was as well within as my cursed looks. You must not think me worse than I am. I am determined not to be overset, but to give up business rather and get 'em to allow me a trifle for services past. O that I had been a shoemaker or a baker, or a man of large independent fortune. O darling laziness! heaven of Epicurus! Saint's Everlasting Rest! that I could drink vast pota-

tions of thee thro' unmeasured Eternity. *Otium cum vel sine dignitate*. Scandalous, dishonorable, any-kind-of *repose*. I stand not upon the *dignified sort*. Accursed, damned desks, trade, commerce, business. Inventions of that old original busybody brainworking Satan, sabbathless, restless Satan. A curse relieves ; do you ever try it ?

A strange letter this to write to a lady, but mere honey'd sentences will not distill. I dare not ask who revises in my stead. I have drawn you into a scrape. I am ashamed, but I know no remedy. My unwellness must be my apology. God bless you (tho' he curse the India House and fire it to the ground) and may no unkind error creep into *Marie*, may all its readers like it as well as I do and everybody about you like its kind author no worse. Why the devil am I never to have a chance of scribbling my own free thoughts, verse or prose, again ? Why must I write of tea and drugs and price goods and bales of indigo — farewell.

C. LAMB

[*Written at head of Letter on margin the following :*]

Mary goes to her place on Sunday — I mean your maid, foolish Mary. She wants a very little brains only to be an excellent servant. She is excellently calculated for the country, where nobody has brains.

CCXLIV.—TO WILLIAM AYRTON

October 4, 1815.

Dear Ayrton, — I am confident that the word *air* in your sense does not occur in Spenser or Shakspeare, much less in older writers. The first trace I remember of it is in Milton's sonnet to Lawrence, "Warble immortal verse and Tuscan air;" where, if the word had not been very newly familiarized, he would doubtless have used *airs* in the plural.

Yours in haste, C. L.

CCXLV.—TO WILLIAM AYRTON

October 14, 1815.

Dear A., — Concerning "Air" — Shakspeare's *Twelfth Night* has "light airs and giddy recollections;" I am sure I forget whereabouts. Also you will see another use of it in the *Tempest* (same sense) in Johnson's Dictionary. Spenser I still persist in, has it not, much less Chaucer. I have turned to all their places about music.

C. L.

No doubt we had it from the Italian *aria*, — now *aria* is not the Latin *aera* modernized, but *aer*, is it not?

CCXLVI. — TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

October 19, 1815.

My brother is gone to Paris.

Dear Miss H., — I am forced to be the replier to your letter, for Mary has been ill and gone from home these five weeks yesterday. She has left me very lonely and very miserable. I stroll about, but there is no rest but at one's own fire-side, and there is no rest for me there now. I look forward to the worse half being past, and keep up as well as I can. She has begun to show some favourable symptoms. The return of her disorder has been frightfully soon this time, with scarce a six months' interval. I am almost afraid my worry of spirits about the East India House was partly the cause of her illness, but one always imputes it to the cause next at hand ; more probably it comes from some cause we have no control over or conjecture of. It cuts sad great slices out of the time, the little time we shall have to live together. I don't know but the recurrence of these illnesses might help me to sustain her death better than if we had had no partial separations. But I won't talk of death. I will imagine us immortal, or forget that we are otherwise ; by God's blessing in a few weeks we may be making our meal together, or sitting in the front row of the pit at Drury Lane, or taking our evening walk past the theatres, to look at the

outside of them at least, if not to be tempted in. Then we forget we are assailable: we are strong for the time as rocks; the wind is tempered to the shorn Lambs.

Poor C. Lloyd, and poor Priscilla, I feel I hardly feel enough for him, my own calamities press about me and involve me in a thick integument not to be reached at by other folks' misfortunes. But I feel all I can, and all the kindness I can towards you all. God bless you. I hear nothing from Coleridge.

Yours truly, C. LAMB

CCXLVII. — TO THOMAS MANNING

December 25, 1815.

Dear old friend and absentee, — This is Christmas-day 1815 with us; what it may be with you I don't know, the 12th of June next year perhaps; and if it should be the consecrated season with you, I don't see how you can keep it. You have no turkeys; you would not desecrate the festival by offering up a withered Chinese bantam, instead of the savoury grand Norfolkian holocaust, that smokes all around my nostrils at this moment from a thousand firesides. Then what puddings have you? Where will you get holly to stick in your churches, or churches to stick your dried tea-leaves (that must be the substitute) in? What memorials you can have of the holy time, I see not. A chopped missionary

or two may keep up the thin idea of Lent and the wilderness; but what standing evidence have you of the Nativity? — 't is our rosy-cheeked, homestalled divines, whose faces shine to the tune of *unto us a child*; faces fragrant with the mincepies of half a century, that alone can authenticate the cheerful mystery — I feel.

I feel my bowels refreshed with the holy tide; my zeal is great against the unedified heathen. Down with the pagodas — down with the idols — Ching-chong-fo — and his foolish priesthood! Come out of Babylon, O my friend! for her time is come, and the child that is native, and the proselyte of her gates, shall kindle and smoke together! And in sober sense what makes you so long from among us, Manning? You must not expect to see the same England again which you left.

Empires have been overturned, crowns trodden into dust, the face of the western world quite changed: your friends have all got old — those you left blooming — myself (who am one of the few that remember you), those golden hairs which you recollect my taking a pride in, turned to silvery and grey. Mary has been dead and buried many years; she desired to be buried in the silk gown you sent her. Rickman, that you remember active and strong, now walks out supported by a servant-maid and a stick. Martin Burney is a very old man.

The other day an aged woman knocked at my

door, and pretended to my acquaintance ; it was long before I had the most distant cognition of her ; but at last together we made her out to be Louisa, the daughter of Mrs. Topham, formerly Mrs. Morton, who had been Mrs. Reynolds, formerly Mrs. Kenney, whose first husband was Holcroft, the dramatic writer of the last century. St. Paul's Church is a heap of ruins ; the Monument is n't half so high as you knew it, divers parts being successively taken down which the ravages of time had rendered dangerous ; the horse at Charing Cross is gone, no one knows whither, — and all this has taken place while you have been settling whether Ho-hing-tong should be spelt with a —— or a —— . For aught I see, you had almost as well remain where you are, and not come like a Struldbrug into a world where few were born when you went away. Scarce here and there one will be able to make out your face ; all your opinions will be out of date, your jokes obsolete, your puns rejected with fastidiousness as wit of the last age. Your way of mathematics has already given way to a new method, which after all is I believe the old doctrine of Maclaurin, new-vamped up with what he borrowed of the negative quantity of fluxions from Euler.

Poor Godwin ! I was passing his tomb the other day in Cripplegate churchyard. There are some verses upon it written by Miss Hayes, which if I thought good enough I would send

you. He was one of those who would have hailed your return, not with boisterous shouts and clamours, but with the complacent gratulations of a philosopher anxious to promote knowledge as leading to happiness—but his systems and his theories are ten feet deep in Cripplegate mould.

Coleridge is just dead, having lived just long enough to close the eyes of Wordsworth, who paid the debt to nature but a week or two before. Poor Col., but two days before he died he wrote to a bookseller proposing an epic poem on the *Wanderings of Cain*, in twenty-four books. It is said he has left behind him more than forty thousand treatises in criticism and metaphysics, but few of them in a state of completion. They are now destined, perhaps, to wrap up spices. You see what mutations the busy hand of Time has produced, while you have consumed in foolish voluntary exile that time which might have gladdened your friends—benefited your country; but reproaches are useless. Gather up the wretched reliques, my friend, as fast as you can, and come to your old home. I will rub my eyes and try to recognise you. We will shake withered hands together, and talk of old things—of St. Mary's Church and the barber's opposite, where the young students in mathematics used to assemble. Poor Crisp, that kept it afterwards, set up a fruiterer's shop in Trumpington Street, and for aught I know, resides there still, for I saw

the name up in the last journey I took there with my sister just before she died.

I suppose you heard that I had left the India House, and gone into the Fishmongers' Alms-houses over the bridge. I have a little cabin there, small and homely; but you shall be welcome to it. You like oysters, and to open them yourself; I'll get you some if you come in oyster time. Marshall, Godwin's old friend, is still alive, and talks of the faces you used to make.

Come as soon as you can.

C. LAMB

CCXLVIII.— TO THOMAS MANNING¹

December 26, 1815.

Dear Manning, — Following your brother's example, I have just ventured one letter to Canton, and am now hazarding another (not exactly a duplicate) to St. Helena. The first was full of improbable romantic fictions, fitting the remoteness of the mission it goes upon; in the present I mean to confine myself nearer to truth as you come nearer home. A correspondence with the uttermost parts of the earth necessarily involves in it some heat of fancy; it sets the brain a-going; but I can think on the half-way house tranquilly. Your friends, then, are not all dead or grown forgetful of you thro' old age, as that lying letter

¹ An autograph facsimile of this letter appears, in its chronological order, in Vol. I.

asserted, anticipating rather what must happen if you kept tarrying on for ever on the skirts of creation, as there seemed a danger of your doing — but they are all tolerably well and in full and perfect comprehension of what is meant by Manning's coming home again. Mrs. Kenney (*ci-devant* Holcroft) never let her tongue [run] riot more than in remembrances of you. Fanny expends herself in phrases that can only be justify'd by her romantic nature. Mary reserves a portion of your silk, not to be buried in (as the false nuncio asserts), but to make up spick and span into a new-bran gown to wear when you come. I am the same as when you knew me, almost to a surfeiting identity. This very night I am going to *leave off tobacco!* Surely there must be some other world in which this unconquerable purpose shall be realised. The soul hath not her generous aspirings implanted in her in vain.

One that you knew, and I think the only one of those friends we knew much of in common, has died in earnest. Poor Priscilla, wife of Kit Wordsworth! Her brother Robert is also dead, and several of the grown-up brothers and sisters, in the compass of a very few years. Death has not otherwise meddled much in families that I know. Not but he has his damn'd eye upon us, and is whetting his infernal feathered dart every instant, as you see him truly pictured in that impressive moral picture, "The Good Man at the hour of death."

I have in trust to put in the post four letters from Diss, and one from Lynn, to St. Helena, which I hope will accompany this safe, and one from Lynn, and the one before spoken of from me, to Canton. But we all hope that these latter may be waste paper. I don't know why I have forborne writing so long. But it is such a forlorn hope to send a scrap of paper straggling over wide oceans. And yet I know when you come home, I shall have you sitting before me at our fire-side just as if you had never been away. In such an instant does the return of a person dissipate all the weight of imaginary perplexity from distance of time and space!

I'll promise you good oysters. Cory is dead, that kept the shop opposite St. Dunstan's, but the tougher materials of the shop survive the perishing frame of its keeper. Oysters continue to flourish there under as good auspices. Poor Cory! But if you will absent yourself twenty years together, you must not expect numerically the same population to congratulate your return which wetted the sea-beach with their tears when you went away.

Have you recovered the breathless stone-staring astonishment into which you must have been thrown upon learning at landing that an Emperor of France was living in St. Helena? What an event in the solitude of the seas! like finding a fish's bone at the top of Plinlimmon; but these things are nothing in our western world.

Novelties cease to affect. Come and try what
your presence can. God bless you.

Your old friend, C. LAMB

CCXLIX.— TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

April 9, 1816.

Dear Wordsworth, — Thanks for the books
you have given me and for all the books you mean
to give me. I will bind up the Political Sonnets
and Ode according to your suggestion. I have
not bound the poems yet. I wait till people have
done borrowing them. I think I shall get a chain,
and chain them to my shelves *more Bodleiano*, and
people may come and read them at chain's length.
For of those who borrow, some read slow, some
mean to read but don't read, and some neither
read nor meant to read, but borrow to leave you
an opinion of their sagacity. I must do my
money-borrowing friends the justice to say that
there is nothing of this caprice or wantonness
of alienation in them. When they borrow my
money, they never fail to make use of it. Cole-
ridge has been here about a fortnight. His health
is tolerable at present, though beset with tempt-
ations. In the first place, the Covent Garden
Manager has declined accepting his tragedy, tho'
(having read it) I see no reason upon earth why
it might not have run a very fair chance, tho' it
certainly wants a prominent part for a Miss O'Neil
or a Mr. Kean. However he is going to-day to

write to Lord Byron to get it to Drury. Should you see Mrs. C., who has just written to C. a letter which I have given him, it will be as well to say nothing about its fate till some answer is shaped from Drury. He has two volumes printing together at Bristol, both finished as far as the composition goes; the latter containing his fugitive poems, the former his Literary Life. Nature, who conducts every creature by instinct to its best end, has skilfully directed C. to take up his abode at a chemist's laboratory in Norfolk Street. She might as well have sent a *belluo librorum* for cure to the Vatican. God keep him inviolate among the traps and pitfalls. He has done pretty well as yet.

Tell Miss H[utchinson] my sister is every day wishing to be quietly sitting down to answer her very kind letter, but while C. stays she can hardly find a quiet time; God bless him!

Tell Mrs. W. her postscripts are always agreeable. They are so legible too. Your manual-graphy is terrible, dark as Lycophron. "Likelihood" for instance is thus typified [*here Lamb makes an illegible scribble*].

I should not wonder if the constant making out of such paragraphs is the cause of that weakness in Mrs. W.'s eyes as she is tenderly pleased to express it. Dorothy I hear has mounted spectacles; so you have deoculated two of your dearest relations in life. Well, God bless you and continue to give you power to write with a finger of power

upon our hearts what you fail to impress in corresponding lucidness upon our outward eyesight.

Mary's love to all; she is quite well.

I am call'd off to do the deposits on Cotton Wool; but why do I relate this to you who want faculties to comprehend the great mystery of deposits, of interest, of warehouse rent, and contingent fund? Adieu. C. LAMB

A longer letter when C. is gone back into the country, relating his success, &c. — *my* judgment of *your* new books, &c., &c. — I am scarce quiet enough while he stays.

Yours again, C. L.

CCL.—TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

April 26, 1816.

Dear W., — I have just finished the pleasing task of correcting the revise of the Poems and letter. I hope they will come out faultless. One blunder I saw and shuddered at. The hallucinating rascal had printed *battered* for *battened*, this last not conveying any distinct sense to his gaping soul. The Reader (as they call 'em) had discovered it and given it the marginal brand, but the substitutory *n* had not yet appeared. I accompanied his notice with a most pathetic address to the printer not to neglect the correction. I know how such a blunder would "batter at your peace." With regard to the works, the Letter I read with

unabated satisfaction. Such a thing was wanted ; called for. The parallel of Cotton with Burns I heartily approve; Izaak Walton hallows any page in which his reverend name appears. "Duty archly bending to purposes of general benevolence" is exquisite. The Poems I endeavoured not to understand, but to read them with my eye alone, and I think I succeeded (some people will do that when they come out, you'll say). As if I were to luxuriate to-morrow at some picture gallery I was never at before, and going by to-day by chance, found the door open, had but five minutes to look about me, peeped in, just such a *chastised* peep I took with my mind at the lines my luxuriating eye was coursing over unrestrained, — not to anticipate another day's fuller satisfaction.

Coleridge is printing *Christabel*, by Lord Byron's recommendation to Murray, with what he calls a vision, *Kubla Khan* — which said vision he repeats so enchantingly that it irradiates and brings heaven and Elysian bowers into my parlour while he sings or says it, but there is an observation "Never tell thy dreams," and I am almost afraid that *Kubla Khan* is an owl that won't bear daylight, I fear lest it should be discovered, by the lantern of typography and clear reducing to letters, no better than nonsense or no sense. When I was young I used to chant with extasy *Mild Arcadians ever blooming*, till somebody told me it was meant to be nonsense. Even yet I have

a lingering attachment to it, and think it better than *Windsor Forest*, *Dying Christian's Address*, &c. — C. has sent his Tragedy to Drury Lane Theatre. It cannot be acted this season, and by their manner of receiving it, I hope he will be able to alter it to make them accept it for next. He is at present under the medical care of a Mr. Gilman (Killman?) a Highgate apothecary, where he plays at leaving off laudanum. I think his essentials not touched: he is very bad, but then he wonderfully picks up another day, and his face when he repeats his verses hath its ancient glory, an Archangel a little damaged.

Will Miss H. pardon our not replying at length to her kind letter? We are not quiet enough. Morgan is with us every day, going betwixt Highgate and the Temple. Coleridge is absent but four miles, and the neighbourhood of such a man is as exciting as the presence of fifty ordinary persons. 'T is enough to be within the whiff and wind of his genius, for us not to possess our souls in quiet. If I lived with him or the *author of the Excursion*, I should in a very little time lose my own identity, and be dragged along in the current of other people's thoughts, hampered in a net.

How cool I sit in this office, with no possible interruption further than what I may term *material*; there is not as much metaphysics in thirty-six of the people here as there is in the first page of Locke's *Treatise on the Human Understanding*,

or as much poetry as in any ten lines of the *Pleasures of Hope* or more natural *Beggar's Petition*. I never entangle myself in any of their speculations. Interruptions, if I try to write a letter even, I have dreadful. Just now within four lines I was call'd off for ten minutes to consult dusty old books for the settlement of obsolete errors. I hold you a guinea you don't find the chasm where I left off, so excellently the wounded sense closed again and was healed.

N. B. Nothing said above to the contrary but that I hold the personal presence of the two mentioned potent spirits at a rate as high as any: but I pay dearer; what amuses others robs me of myself; my mind is positively discharged into their greater currents, but flows with a willing violence. As to your question about work, it is far less oppressive to me than it was, from circumstances; it takes all the golden part of the day away, a solid lump from ten to four, but it does not kill my peace as before. Some day or other I shall be in a taking again. My head akes and you have had enough. God bless you.

C. LAMB

CCLI. — TO LEIGH HUNT

May 13, 1816.

Dear Sir, — I thank you much for the curious volume of Southey, which I return, together with

Falstaff's Letters, Elgin Stone Report, and a little work of my own, of which perhaps you have no copy and I have a great many.

Yours truly, C. LAMB

CCLII. — TO MATILDA BETHAM

June 1, 1816.

Dear Miss Betham, — I have sent your *very pretty lines* to Southey in a frank as you requested. Poor S., what a grievous loss he must have had! Mary and I rejoice in the prospect of seeing you soon in town. Let *us* be among the very first persons you come to see. Believe me that you can have no friends who respect and love you more than ourselves. Pray present our kind remembrances to Barbara, and to all to whom you may think they will be acceptable.

Yours very sincerely, C. LAMB

Have you seen *Christabel* since its publication?

CCLIII. — TO H. BODWELL

July, 1816.

My dear fellow, — I have been in a lethargy this long while, and forgotten London, Westminster, Marybone, Paddington — they all went clean out of my head, till happening to go to a neighbour's in this good borough of Calne, for want of

whist players, we fell upon *Commerce*: the word awoke me to a remembrance of my professional avocations and the long-continued strife which I have been these twenty-four years endeavouring to compose between those grand Irreconcilables Cash and Commerce; I instantly called for an almanack, which with some difficulty was procured at a fortune-teller's in the vicinity (for the happy holyday people here having nothing to do, keep no account of time), and found that by dint of duty I must attend in Leadenhall on Wednes'y morning next, and shall attend accordingly.

Does Master Hannah give macaroons still, and does he fetch the *Cobbetts* from my attic? Perhaps it would n't be too much trouble for him to drop the inclosed up at my aforesaid chamber, and any letters, &c., with it; but the inclosed should go without delay.

N. B. — He is n't to fetch Monday's *Cobbett*, but it is to wait my reading when I come back. Heigh Ho! Lord have mercy upon me, how many does two and two make? I am afraid I shall make a poor clerk in future, I am spoiled with rambling among haycocks and cows and pigs. Bless me! I had like to have forgot (the air is so temperate and oblivious here) to say I have seen your brother, and hope he is doing well in the finest spot of the world. More of these things when I return. Remember me to the gentlemen, — I forget names. Shall I find all my letters at my rooms on Tuesday? If you forgot

to send 'em never mind, for I don't much care for reading and writing now ; I shall come back again by degrees, I suppose, into my former habits. How is Bruce de Ponthieu, and Porcher and Co.? — the tears come into my eyes when I think how long I have neglected ——.

Adieu ! ye fields, ye shepherds and — herdesses, and dairies and cream-pots, and fairies and dances upon the green.

I come, I come. Don't drag me so hard by the hair of my head, Genius of British India ! I know my hour is come, Faustus must give up his soul, O Lucifer, O Mephistopheles ! Can you make out what all this letter is about ? I am afraid to look it over. CH. LAMB

Calne, Wilts, Friday,
July something, old style, 1816.

No new style here, all the styles are old, and some of the gates too for that matter.

CCLIV. — TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

September 23, 1816.

My dear Wordsworth, — It seems an age since we have corresponded, but indeed the interim has been stuff'd out with more variety than usually checquers my same-seeming existence. Mercy on me, what a traveller have I been since I wrote you last ! what foreign wonders have been explored ! I have seen Bath, King Bladud's ancient well, fair Bristol, seed-plot of suicidal Chatterton,

Marlbro', Chippenham, Calne, famous for nothing in particular that I know of — but such a vertigo of locomotion has not seized us for years. We spent a month with the Morgans at the last named Borough — August — and such a change has the change wrought in us that we could not stomach wholesome Temple air, but are absolutely rustivating (O the gentility of it!) at Dalston, about one mischievous boy's stone's throw off Kingsland turnpike, one mile from Shoreditch church, — thence we emanate in various directions to Hackney, Clapton, Totnam, and such like romantic country. That my lungs should ever prove so dainty as to fancy they perceive differences of air! but so it is, tho' I am almost ashamed of it, like Milton's devil (turn'd truant to his old brimstone) I am purging off the foul air of my once darling tobacco in this Eden, absolutely snuffing up pure gales, like old worn-out Sin playing at being innocent, which never comes again, for in spite of good books and good thoughts there is something in a pipe that virtue cannot give, tho' she give her unendowed person for a dowry.

Have you read the review of Coleridge's character, person, physiognomy, &c., in the *Examiner* — his features even to his *nose* — O horrible license beyond the old Comedy. He is himself gone to the seaside with his favourite apothecary, having left for publication as I hear a prodigious mass of composition for a sermon to the middling

ranks of people to persuade them they are not so distressed as is commonly supposed. Methinks he should recite it to a congregation of Bilston colliers, — the fate of Cinna the poet would instantaneously be his. God bless him, but certain that rogue *Examiner* has beset him in most unmannerly strains. Yet there is a kind of respect shines thro' the disrespect that to those who know the rare compound (that is the subject of it) almost balances the reproof, but then those who know him but partially or at a distance are so extremely apt to drop the qualifying part thro' their fingers.

The “after all, Mr. Wordsworth is a man of great talents, if he did not abuse them” comes so dim upon the eyes of an *Edinbro' Review* reader, that have been gloating-open chuckle-wide upon the preceding detail of abuses, it scarce strikes the pupil with any consciousness of the letters being there, like letters writ in lemon. There was a cut at me a few months back by the same hand, but my agnomen or agni-nomen not being calculated to strike the popular ear, it dropt anonymous, but it was a pretty compendium of observation, which the author has collected in my disparagement, from some hundreds of social evenings which we had spent together, — however in spite of all, there is something tough in my attachment to H[azlitt], which these violent strainings cannot quite dislocate or sever asunder. I get no conversation in London that is absolutely worth attending to but his. There is mon-

strous little sense in the world, or I am monstrous clever, or squeamish or something, but there is nobody to talk to — to talk *with* I should say — and to go talking to one's self all day long is too much of a good thing, besides subjecting one to the imputation of being out of one's senses, which does no good to one's temporal interest at all.

By the way, I have seen Coleridge but once these three or four months. He is an odd person, when he first comes to town he is quite hot upon visiting, and then he turns off and absolutely never comes at all, but seems to forget there are any such people in the world. I made one attempt to visit him (a morning call) at Highgate, but there was something in him or his apothecary which I found so unattractively-repulsing from any temptation to call again, that I stay away as naturally as a lover visits. The rogue gives you love powders, and then a strong horse drench to bring 'em off your stomach that they may n't hurt you.

I was very sorry the printing of your letter was not quite to your mind, but I surely did not think but you had arranged the manner of breaking the paragraphs from some principle known to your own mind, and for some of the errors, I am confident that note of admiration in the middle of two words did not stand so when I had it, it must have dropt out and been replaced wrong, so odious a blotch could not have escaped

me. Gifford (whom God curse) has persuaded squinting Murray (whom may God not bless) not to accede to an offer Field made for me to print two volumes of Essays, to include the one on Hogarth and one or two more, but most of the matter to be new, but I dare say I should never have found time to make them; M. would have had 'em, but shewed specimens from the *Reflector* to G——, as he acknowledged to Field, and Crispin did for me. “Not on his soal [sole], but on his soul, damn'd Jew,” may the malediction of my eternal antipathy light. We desire much to hear from you, and of you all, including Miss Hutchinson, for not writing to whom Mary feels a weekly (and did for a long time feel a daily) pang. How is Southey? I hope his pen will continue to move many years smoothly and continuously for all the rubs of the rogue *Examiner*. A pertinacious foul-mouthed villain it is!

This is written for a rarity at the seat of business: it is but little time I can generally command from secular calligraphy, — the pen seems to know as much and makes letters like figures — an obstinate clerkish thing. It shall make a couplet in spite of its nib before I have done with it,

and so I end,

Commending me to your love, my dearest friend.

From Leaden Hall, September something, 1816,

C. LAMB

CCLV.—MARY LAMB TO SARAH
HUTCHINSON

Middle of November, 1816.

Mary has barely left me room to say How d' ye. I have received back the *Examiner* containing the delicate inquiry into certain infirm parts of S. T. C.'s character. What is the general opinion of it? Farewell. My love to all.

C. LAMB

My dear friend, — I have just been reading your kind letter over again and find you had some doubt whether we had left the Temple entirely. It was merely a lodging we took to recruit our health and spirits. From the time we left Calne, Charles drooped sadly, company became quite irksome, and his anxious desire to leave off smoking, and his utter inability to perform his daily resolutions against it, became quite a torment to him, so I prevailed with him to try the experiment of change of scene, and set out in one of the short stage-coaches from Bishopsgate Street, Miss Brent and I, and we looked over all the little places within three miles, and fixed on one quite countrified and not two miles from Shore-ditch church, and entered upon it the next day. I thought if we stayed but a week it would be a little rest and respite from our troubles, and we made a ten weeks' stay, and very comfortable we were, so much so that if ever Charles is super-

annuated on a small pension, which is the great object of his ambition, and we felt our income straitened, I do think I could live in the country entirely ; at least I thought so while I was there, but since I have been at home I wish to live and die in the Temple, where I was born. We left the trees so green it looked like early autumn, and can see but one leaf "The last of its clan" on our poor old Hare Court trees.

What a rainy summer ! — and yet I have been so much out of town and have made so much use of every fine day that I can hardly help thinking it has been a fine summer. We calculated we walked three hundred and fifty miles while we were in our country lodging. One thing I must tell you, Charles came round every morning to a shop near the Temple to get shaved. Last Sunday we had such a pleasant day, I must tell you of it. We went to Kew and saw the old palace where the King was brought up, it was the pleasantest sight I ever saw, I can scarcely tell you why, but a charming old woman shewed it to us. She had lived twenty-six years there and spoke with such a hearty love of our good old King, whom all the world seems to have forgotten, that it did me good to hear her. She was as proud in pointing out the plain furniture (and I am sure you are now sitting in a larger and better furnished room) of a small room in which the King always dined, nay more proud of the simplicity of her royal master's taste, than any

shower of Carlton House can be in showing the fine things there, and so she was when she made us remark the smallness of one of the Princess's bedrooms, and said she slept and also dressed in that little room. There are a great many good pictures, but I was most pleased with one of the King when he was about two years old, such a pretty little white-headed boy.

I cannot express how much pleasure a letter from you gives us. If I could promise myself I should be always as well as I am now, I would say I will be a better correspondent in future. If Charles has time to add a line I shall be less ashamed to send this hasty scrawl. Love to all and every one. How much I should like once more to see Miss Wordsworth's handwriting, if she would but write a postscript to your next, which I look to receive in a few days.

Yours affectionately, M. LAMB

For a postscript see the beginning.

CCLVI. — TO MISS BETHAM

[No date.]

Dear Miss Betham, — That accursed word "trill" has vexed me excessively. I have referred to the MS. and certainly the printer is exonerated; it is much more like a *tr* than a *k*. But what shall I say of myself?

If you can trust me hereafter, I will be more

careful. I will go thro' the poem, unless you should feel more safe by doing it yourself. In fact, a second person looking over a proof is liable to let pass anything that sounds plausible. The act of looking it over seeming to require only an attention to the words — that they have the proper component letters, one scarce thinks then (or but half) of the sense. You will find one line I have ventured to alter in third sheet. You had made "hope" and "yoke" rhyme, which is intolerable. Everybody can see and carp at a bad rhyme, or no rhyme. It strikes as slovenly like bad spelling.

I found out another *sung*, but I could not alter it, and I would not delay the time by writing to you. Besides, it is not at all conspicuous — it comes in, by the bye, "the strains I sung." The other obnoxious word was in an eminent place, at the beginning of "Her lay, when all ears are upon her."

I must conclude hastily, dear M. B.,

Yours,

C. L.

CCLVII. — MARY LAMB TO SARAH
HUTCHINSON

[Late 1816.]

My dear Miss Hutchinson, — I had intended to write you a long letter, but as my frank is dated I must send it off with a bare acknowledgment of the receipt of your kind letter. One question I must hastily ask you. Do you think Mr. Wordsworth would have any reluctance to

write (strongly recommending to their patronage) to any of his rich friends in London to solicit employment for Miss Betham as a miniature painter? If you give me hopes that he will not be averse to do this, I will write to you more fully stating the infinite good he would do by performing so irksome a task as I know asking favours to be. In brief, she has contracted debts for printing her beautiful poem of *Marie*, which like all things of original excellence does not sell at all.

These debts have led to little accidents unbecoming a woman and a poetess to suffer. Retirement with such should be voluntary.

[*Charles Lamb adds:*]

The bell rings. I just snatch the pen out of my sister's hand to finish rapidly. Wordsworth may tell De Quincey that Miss Betham's price for a *Virgin and Child* is three guineas.

Yours (all of you) ever, C. L.

CCLVIII. — TO JOHN RICKMAN

December 30, 1816.

Dear R.,—Your goose found her way into our larder with infinite discretion. Judging by her giblets which we have sacrificed first, she is a most sensible bird. Mary bids me say, first, that she thanks you for your remembrance, next that Mr. Norris and his family are no less indebted to you

as the cause of his reverend and amiable visage being perpetuated when his soul is flown. Finding nothing like a subscription going on for the unhappy lady, and not knowing how to press an actual sum upon her, she hit upon the expedient of making believe that Mr. N. wanted his miniature (which his chops did seem to water after, I must confess, when 't was first proposed, though with a *Nolo Pingier* for modesty), and the likeness being completed, your £5 is to go as from him. This I must confess is robbing Peter, or like the equitable distribution in *Alexander's Feast*, "Love was crowned" though somebody else "won the cause." And Love himself, smiling Love, he might have sat for, so complacent he sat as he used to sit when in his days of courtship he ogled thro' his spectacles. I have a shrewd suspicion he has an eye upon his spouse's picture after this, and probably some collateral branches may follow of the Norris or Faint Stock, so that your forerunner may prove a notable decoy duck. The Colliers are going to sit. Item, her knightly brother in Ireland is soon coming over, apprized of her difficulties, and I confidently hope an emergence for her.

But G. Dyer executor to a nobleman! G. D. residuary legatee! What whirligig of fortune is this? *Valet ima Summis*. Strange world, strange kings, strange composition!—I can't enjoy it sufficiently till I get a more active belief in it. You've seen the will of Lord Stanhope. Conceive

his old floor strew'd with *disiecta membra Poeseos*, now loaden with codicils, deeds of trust, letters of attorney, bonds, obligations, forfeitures, exchequer bills, *noverint universis*. "Mr. Serjeant Best, pray take my arm-chair. My Lord Holland sit here. Lord Grantly, will your Lordship take the other? Mr. Jekyll, excuse my offering you the window-seat. We'll now have that clause read over again."

B. and Fletcher describe a little French lawyer spoilt by an accidental duel he got thrust into, from a notable counsellor turned into a bravo. Here is G. D. more contra-naturally metamorphosed. My life on it, henceforth he explodes his old hobby horses. No more poring into Cambridge records; here are other title-deeds to be looked into — now can he make any Joan a Lady. And if he don't get too proud to marry, that long unsolved problem of G. D. is in danger of being quickly melted. They can't choose but come and make offer of their coy wares. I see Miss H. prim up her chin, Miss B-n-j-o cock her nose.

He throws his dirty glove. G. D., *Iratis Veneribus*, marries, for my life on 't.

And 'tis odds in that case but he leaves off making love and verses.

Indeed I look upon our friend as dead, dead to all his desperate fancies, pleasures, — he has lost the dignity of verse, the dignity of poverty, the dignity of digging on in desperation through mines

of literature that yielded nothing. Adieu! the wrinkled brow, the chin half shaved, the ruined arm-chair, the wind-admitting and expelling screen, the fluttering pamphlets, the lost letters, the documents never to be found when wanting, the unserviceable comfortable landress.

G. D.'s occupation's o'er!

Demptus per vim mentis gratissimus error!

Haec pauca de amico nostro antiquo accipe pro naeniis exequiis, et eiusdem generis aliis. Vale noster G. D.

From yours as he was, unchanged by Fortune.

C. L.

CCLIX.—TO WILLIAM AYRTON

April 18, 1817.

Dear A.,—I am in your debt for a very delightful evening — I should say two — but *Don Giovanni* in particular was exquisite, and I am almost inclined to allow music to be one of the liberal arts; which before I doubted. Could you let me have three gallery tickets — don't be startled — they shall positively be the last — or two or one — for the same, for to-morrow or Tuesday. They will be of no use for to-morrow if not put in the post *this day* address to me, Mr. Lamb, India House; if for any other evening, your usual blundering direction, No. 3 Middle Temple instead of 4 Inner Temple Lane will do.

Yours,

CH. LAMB

CCLX. — TO WILLIAM AYRTON

May 12, 1817.

My dear friend, —
Before I end,
Have you any
More orders for Don Giovanni
To give
Him that doth live
Your faithful Zany?
Without raillery
I mean Gallery
Ones :
For I am a person that shuns
All ostentation
And being at the top of the fashion :
And seldom go to operas
But *in formâ Pauperis*.

I go to the Play
In a very economical sort of a way,
Rather to see
Than be seen.
Though I 'm no ill sight
Neither,
By candle-light,
And in some kinds of weather.
You might pit me
For height
Against Kean ;
But in a grand tragic scene
I 'm nothing.
It would create a kind of loathing
To see me act Hamlet.
There 'd be many a damn let
Fly

At my presumption
If I should try,
Being a fellow of no gumption.

By the way, tell me candidly how you relish
This, which they call the lapidary
Style?

Opinions vary.
The late Mr. Mellish
Could never abide it.
He thought it vile,
And coxcombical.
My friend the Poet Laureat,
Who is a great lawyer at
Anything comical,
Was the first who tried it ;
But Mellish could never abide it.
But it signifies very little what Mellish said,
Because he is dead.
For who can confute
A body that 's mute ?
Or who would fight
With a senseless sprite ?
Or think of troubling
An impenetrable old goblin
That 's dead and gone,
And stiff as a stone,
To convince him with arguments pro and con,
As if he were some live logician
Bred up at Merton,
Or Mr. Hazlitt, the Metaphysician —
Ha ! Mr. Ayrton !
With all your rare tone.

For tell me how should an apparition
List to your call,

Though you talk'd for ever,
 Ever so clever,
 When his ear itself,
 By which he must hear, or not hear at all,
 Is laid on the shelf?
 Or put the case
 (For more grace)
 It were a female spectre —
 How could you expect her
 To take much gust
 In long speeches,
 With her tongue as dry as dust,
 In a sandy place,
 Where no peaches,
 Nor lemons, nor limes, nor oranges hang,
 To drop on the drought of an arid harangue,
 Or quench,
 With their sweet drench,
 The fiery pangs which the worms inflict,
 With their endless nibblings,
 Like quibblings,
 Which the corpse may dislike, but can ne'er contra-
 dict —
 Ha! Mr. Ayrton
 With all your rare tone —
 I am, C. LAMB

CCLXI. — TO BARRON FIELD

August 31, 1817.

My dear Barron, — The bearer of this letter
 so far across the seas is Mr. Lawrey, who comes
 out to you as a missionary, and whom I have been
 strongly importuned to recommend to you as a
 most worthy creature by Mr. Fenwick, a very old,

honest friend of mine, of whom, if my memory does not deceive me, you have had some knowledge heretofore as editor of the *Statesman* — a man of talent, and patriotic. If you can show him any facilities in his arduous undertaking, you will oblige us much.

Well, and how does the land of thieves use you? and how do you pass your time in your extra-judicial intervals? Going about the streets with a lantern, like Diogenes, looking for an honest man? You may look long enough, I fancy. Do give me some notion of the manners of the inhabitants where you are. They don't thieve all day long, do they? No human property could stand such continuous battery. And what do they do when they an't stealing?

Have you got a theatre? What pieces are performed? Shakespear's, I suppose — not so much for the poetry, as for his having once been in danger of leaving his country on account of certain "small deer."

Have you poets among you? Damn'd plagiarists, I fancy, if you have any. I would not trust an idea or a pocket-handkerchief of mine among 'em. You are almost competent to answer Lord Bacon's problem, whether a nation of atheists can subsist together. You are practically in one, —

So thievish 't is, that the eighth commandment itself
Scarce seemeth there to be.

Our old honest world goes on with little per-

ceptible variation. Of course you have heard of poor Mitchell's death, and that G. Dyer is one of Lord Stanhope's residuaries. I am afraid he has not touched much of the residue yet. He is positively as lean as Cassius. Barnes is going to Demerara or Essequibo, I am not quite certain which. Alsager is turned actor. He came out in genteel comedy at Cheltenham this season, and has hopes of a London engagement.

For my own history, I am just in the same spot, doing the same thing (*videlicet*, little or nothing) as when you left me; only I have positive hopes that I shall be able to conquer that inveterate habit of smoking which you may remember I indulged in. I think of making a beginning this evening, *viz.*, Sunday 31st August, 1817, not Wednesday, 2nd Feb., 1818, as it will be perhaps when you read this for the first time. There is the difficulty of writing from one end of the globe (hemispheres I call 'em) to another! Why, half the truths I have sent you in this letter will become lies before they reach you, and some of the lies (which I have mixed for variety's sake, and to exercise your judgment in the finding of them out) may be turned into sad realities before you shall be called upon to detect them. Such are the defects of going by different chronologies. Your now is not my now; and again, your then is not my then; but my now may be your then, and *vice versâ*. Whose head is competent to these things?

How does Mrs. Field get on in her geography? Does she know where she is by this time? I am not sure sometimes you are not in another planet; but then I don't like to ask Capt. Burney, or any of those that know anything about it, for fear of exposing my ignorance.

Our kindest remembrances, however, to Mrs. F., if she will accept of reminiscences from another planet, or at least another hemisphere.

C. L.

CCLXII. — TO JAMES AND LOUISA
KENNEY

Londres, October, 1817.

Dear Friends, — It is with infinite regret I inform you that the pleasing privilege of receiving letters, by which I have for these twenty years gratified my friends and abused the liberality of the Company trading to the Orient, is now at an end. A cruel edict of the Directors has swept it away altogether. The devil sweep away their patronage also. Rascals who think nothing of sponging upon their employers for their venison and turtle and burgundy five days in a week, to the tune of five thousand pounds in a year, now find out that the profits of trade will not allow the innocent communication of thought between their underlings and their friends in distant provinces to proceed untaxed, thus withering up the heart of friendship and

making the news of a friend's good health worse than indifferent, as tidings to be deprecated as bringing with it ungracious expenses. Adieu, gentle correspondence, kindly conveyance of soul, interchange of love, of opinions, of puns and what not! Henceforth a friend that does not stand in visible or palpable distance to me, is nothing to me. They have not left to the bosom of friendship even that cheap intercourse of sentiment the twopenny medium.

The upshot is, you must not direct any more letters through me. To me you may annually, or biennially, transmit a brief account of your goings-on [on] a single sheet, from which after I have deducted as much as the postage comes to, the remainder will be pure pleasure. But no more of those pretty commissions and counter commissions, orders and revoking of orders, obscure messages and obscurer explanations, by which the intellects of Marshall and Fanny used to be kept in a pleasing perplexity, at the moderate rate of six or seven shillings a week. In short, you must use me no longer as a go-between. Henceforth I write up *No Thoroughfare*.

Well, and how far is Saint Valery from Paris; and do you get wine and walnuts tolerable; and the vintage, does it suffer from the wet? I take it, the wine of this season will be all wine and water; and have you any plays and green rooms, and Fanny Kellies to chat with of an evening; and is the air purer than the old gravel pits, and

the bread so much whiter, as they say? Lord, what things you see that travel! I dare say the people are all French wherever you go. What an overwhelming effect that must have! I have stood one of 'em at a time, but two I generally found overpowering, I used to cut and run; but, then, in their own vineyards maybe they are endurable enough. They say marmosets in Senegambia are so pleasant as the day's long, jumping and chattering in the orange twigs; but transport 'em, one by one, over here into England, they turn into monkeys, some with tails, some without, and are obliged to be kept in cages.

I suppose you know we've left the Temple *pro tempore*. By the way, this conduct has caused strange surmises in a good lady of our acquaintance. She lately sent for a young gentleman of the India House, who lives opposite her, at Monroe's, the flute shop in Skinner Street, Snow Hill, — I mention no name, you shall never get out of me what lady I mean, — on purpose to ask all he knew about us. I had previously introduced him to her whist-table. Her inquiries embraced every possible thing that could be known of me, how I stood in the India House, what was the amount of my salary, what it was likely to be hereafter, whether I was thought to be clever in business, why I had taken country lodgings, why at Kingsland in particular, had I friends in that road, was anybody expected to visit me, did I wish for visitors, would an un-

expected call be gratifying or not, would it be better if she sent beforehand, did anybody come to see me, was n't there a gentleman of the name of Morgan, did he know him, did n't he come to see me, did he know how Mr. Morgan lived; she never could make out how they were maintained, was it true that he lived out of the profits of a linendraper's shop in Bishopsgate Street (there she was a little right, and a little wrong — M. is a gentleman tobacconist); in short, she multiplied demands upon him till my friend, who is neither over-modest nor nervous, declared he quite shuddered. After laying as bare to her curiosity as an anatomy he trembled to think what she would ask next. My pursuits, inclinations, aversions, attachments (some, my dear friends, of a most delicate nature), she lugged 'em out of him, or would, had he been privy to them, as you pluck a horse-bean from its iron stem, not as such tender rosebuds should be pulled. The fact is I am come to Kingsland, and that is the real truth of the matter, and nobody but yourselves should have extorted such a confession from me.

I suppose you have seen by the papers that Manning is arrived in England. He expressed some mortifications at not finding Mrs. Kenney in England. He looks a good deal sunburnt, and is got a little reserved, but I hope it will wear off. You will see by the papers also that Dawe is knighted. He has been painting the

Princess of Coborg and her husband. This is all the news I could think of. Write *to* us, but not *by* us, for I have near ten correspondents of this latter description, and one or other comes pouring in every day, till my purse strings and heart strings crack. Bad habits are not broken at once. I am sure you will excuse the apparent indelicacy of mentioning this, but dear is my shirt, but dearer is my skin, and it's too late when the steed is stole, to shut the door.

Well, and does Louisa grow a fine girl, is she likely to have her mother's complexion, and does Tom polish in French air — Henry I mean — and Kenney is not so fidgety, and you sit down sometimes for a quiet half-hour or so, and all is comfortable, no bills (that you call writs) nor anything else (that you are equally sure to miscall) to annoy you? Vive la gaité de cœur et la belle pastime, vive la beau France et revive notre cher Empereur.

C. LAMB

CCLXIII. — MARY LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

November 21, 1817.

My dear Miss Wordsworth, — Your kind letter has given us very great pleasure, — the sight of your handwriting was a most welcome surprise to us. We have heard good tidings of you by all our friends who were so fortunate as to visit you this summer, and rejoice to see it confirmed by

yourself. You have quite the advantage in volunteering a letter. There is no merit in replying to so welcome a stranger.

We have left the Temple. I think you will be sorry to hear this. I know I have never been so well satisfied with thinking of you at Rydal Mount as when I could connect the idea of you with your own Grasmere Cottage. Our rooms were dirty and out of repair, and the inconveniences of living in chambers became every year more irksome, and so at last we mustered up resolution enough to leave the good old place that so long had sheltered us; and here we are, living at a brazier's shop, No. 20, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, a place all alive with noise and bustle, Drury Lane Theatre in sight from our front and Covent Garden from our back windows. The hubbub of the carriages returning from the play does not annoy me in the least — strange that it does not, for it is quite tremendous. I quite enjoy looking out of the window and listening to the calling up of the carriages and the squabbles of the coachmen and linkboys. It is the oddest scene to look down upon; I am sure you would be amused with it. It is well I am in a cheerful place or I should have many misgivings about leaving the Temple.

I look forward with great pleasure to the prospect of seeing my good friend Miss Hutchinson. I wish Rydal Mount with all its inhabitants enclosed were to be transplanted with her and to

remain stationary in the midst of Covent Garden. I passed through the street lately where Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth lodged ; several fine new houses, which were then just rising out of the ground, are quite finished and a noble entrance made that way into Portland Place.

I am very sorry for Mr. De Quincey ; what a blunder the poor man made when he took up his dwelling among the mountains ! I long to see my friend Pypos. Coleridge is still at Little Hampton with Mrs. Gilman ; he has been so ill as to be confined to his room almost the whole time he has been there.

Charles has had all his Hogarths bound in a book ; they were sent home yesterday, and now that I have them all together, and perceive the advantage of peeping close at them through my spectacles, I am reconciled to the loss of them hanging round the room, which has been a great mortification to me. In vain I tried to console myself with looking at our new chairs and carpets, for we have got new chairs, and carpets covering all over our two sitting-rooms ; I missed my old friends and could not be comforted ; then I would resolve to learn to look out of the window, a habit I never could attain in my life, and I have given it up as a thing quite impracticable ; yet when I was at Brighton last summer, the first week I never took my eyes off from the sea, not even to look in a book. I had not seen the sea for sixteen years. Mrs. Morgan, who was with

us, kept her liking, and continued her seat in the window till the very last, while Charles and I played truant and wandered among the hills, which we magnified into little mountains and *almost as good as* Westmoreland scenery. Certainly we made discoveries of many pleasant walks which few of the Brighton visitors have ever dreamed of; for like as is the case in the neighbourhood of London, after the first two or three miles we were sure to find ourselves in a perfect solitude. I hope we shall meet before the walking faculties of either of us fail. You say you can walk fifteen miles with ease, — that is exactly my stint, and more fatigues me; four or five miles every third or fourth day, keeping very quiet between, was all Mrs. Morgan could accomplish.

God bless you and yours. Love to all and each one. I am ever yours most affectionately,

M. LAMB

[*Charles Lamb adds the following note:*]

Dear Miss Wordsworth,— Here we are, transplanted from our native soil. I thought we never could have been torn up from the Temple. Indeed it was an ugly wrench, but like a tooth, now 't is out and I am easy. We never can strike root so deep in any other ground. This, where we are, is a light bit of gardener's mold, and if they take us up from it, it will cost no blood and groans like mandrakes pull'd up. We are in the

individual spot I like best in all this great city. The theatres with all their noises, — Covent Garden, dearer to me than any gardens of Alcinoüs, where we are morally sure of the earliest peas and 'sparagus. Bow Street, where the thieves are examined, within a few yards of us. Mary had not been here four-and-twenty hours before she saw a thief. She sits at the window working ; and casually throwing out her eyes, she sees a concourse of people coming this way, with a constable to conduct the solemnity. These little incidents agreeably diversify a female life. It is a delicate subject, but is Mr. * * * really married? and has he found a gargle to his mind? Oh how funny he did talk to me about her, in terms of such mild quiet whispering speculative profligacy. But did the animalcule and she crawl over the rubric together, or did they not?

Mary has brought her part of this letter to an orthodox and loving conclusion, which is very well, for I have no room for pansies and remembrances. What a nice holyday I got on Wednesday by favour of a princess dying. [*A line and signature cut away.*]

CCLXIV.—TO WILLIAM AYRTON

November 25, 1817.

Dear A., — We keep *our Thursday* (which is become a moveable feast) this evening, *viz.*, Tuesday. We need not say that your company

will be most acceptable. If you can persuade Mrs. A. to accompany you, my sister begs me to say we shall consider the obligation double.

Yours truly, C. L.

N. B. Is not the above rather neatly worded? above my usual cut, I mean. It strikes me so.

CCLXV.— TO JOHN PAYNE COLLIER

December 10, 1817.

Dear J. P. C.,—I know how zealously you feel for our friend S. T. Coleridge; and I know that you and your family attended his lectures four or five years ago. He is in bad health and worse mind: and unless something is done to lighten his mind he will soon be reduced to his extremities; and even these are not in the best condition. I am sure that you will do for him what you can; but at present he seems in a mood to do for himself. He projects a new course, not of physic, nor of metaphysic, nor a new course of life, but a new course of lectures on Shakspear and Poetry. There is no man better qualified (always excepting number one); but I am pre-engaged for a series of dissertations on India and India-pendence, to be completed at the expense of the Company, in I know not (yet) how many volumes foolscap folio.

I am busy getting up my Hindoo mythology; and for the purpose I am once more enduring

Southey's *Curse* [*of Kehama*]. To be serious, Coleridge's state and affairs make me so; and there are particular reasons just now, and have been any time for the last twenty years, why he should succeed. He will do so with a little encouragement. I have not seen him lately; and he does not know that I am writing.

Yours (for Coleridge's sake) in haste,

C. LAMB

CCLXVI. — TO BENJAMIN ROBERT
HAYDON

December [26], 1817.

My dear Haydon, — I will come with pleasure to 22 Lisson Grove North, at Rossi's, half-way up, right-hand side — if I can find it.

Yours,

C. LAMB

CCLXVII. — TO MRS. WILLIAM WORDS-
WORTH

February 18, 1818.

My dear Mrs. Wordsworth, — I have repeatedly taken pen in hand to answer your kind letter. My sister should more properly have done it, but she having failed, I consider myself answerable for her debts. I am now trying to do it in the midst of commercial noises, and with a quill which seems more ready to glide into arithmetical figures and names of goods, cassia, carda-

moms, aloes, ginger, tea, than into kindly responses and friendly recollections.

The reason why I cannot write letters at home is, that I am never alone. Plato's (I write to *W.* *W.* now) — Plato's double animal parted never longed more to be reciprocally reunited in the system of its first creation, than I sometimes do to be but for a moment single and separate. Except my morning's walk to the office, — which is like treading on sands of gold for that reason, — I am never so. I cannot walk home from office but some officious friend offers his damn'd unwelcome courtesies to accompany me. All the morning I am pestered. I could sit and gravely cast up sums in great books, or compare sum with sum, and write "paid" against this and "unpaid" against t'other, and yet reserve in some "corner of my mind" some darling thoughts all my own; faint memory of some passage in a book, or the tone of an absent friend's voice; a snatch of Miss Burrell's singing; a gleam of Fanny Kelly's divine plain face. The two operations might be going on at the same time without thwarting, as the sun's two motions (earth's I mean), or as I sometimes turn round till I am giddy, in my back parlour, while my sister is walking longitudinally in the front — or as the shoulder of veal twists round with the spit, while the smoke wreathes up the chimney; but there are a set of amateurs of the Belles Lettres — the gay science — who come to me as a sort of ren-

deztvous, putting questions of criticism, of British Institutions, Lalla Rookhs, &c., what Coleridge said at the lecture last night — who have the form of reading men, but, for any possible use reading can be to them but to talk of, might as well have been Ante-Cadmeans born, or have lain sucking out the sense of an Egyptian hieroglyph as long as the pyramids will last before they should find it. These pests worrit me at business and in all its intervals, perplexing my accounts, poisoning my little salutary warming-time at the fire, puzzling my paragraphs if I take a newspaper, cramming in between my own free thoughts and a column of figures which had come to an amicable compromise but for them. Their noise ended, one of them, as I said, accompanys me home lest I should be solitary for a moment ; he at length takes his welcome leave at the door, up I go, mutton on table, hungry as hunter, hope to forget my cares and bury them in the agreeable abstraction of mastication, — knock at the door, in comes Mrs. Hazlitt, or M. Burney, or Morgan, or Demogorgon, or my brother, or somebody, to prevent my eating alone, a process absolutely necessary to my poor wretched digestion. O the pleasure of eating alone ! — eating my dinner alone ! let me think of it. But in they come, and make it absolutely necessary that I should open a bottle of orange — for my meat turns into stone when any one dines with me, if I have not wine — wine can mollify stones.

Then *that* wine turns into acidity, acerbity, misanthropy, a hatred of my interrupters (God bless 'em! I love some of 'em dearly), and with the hatred a still greater aversion to their going away. Bad is the dead sea they bring upon me, choaking and death-doing, but worse is the deader dry sand they leave me on if they go before bedtime. Come never, I would say to these spoilers of my dinner; but if you come, never go. The fact is, this interruption does not happen very often, but every time it comes by surprise that present bane of my life, orange wine, with all its dreary stifling consequences, follows. Evening company I should always like had I any mornings, but I am saturated with human faces (*divine* forsooth!) and voices all the golden morning, and five evenings in a week would be as much as I should covet to be in company, but I assure you that is a wonderful week in which I can get two, or one, to myself. I am never C. L. but always C. L. and Co.

He, who thought it not good for man to be alone, preserve me from the more prodigious monstrosity of being never by myself. I forget bedtime, but even there these sociable frogs clamber up to annoy me. Once a week, generally some singular evening that, being alone, I go to bed at the hour I ought always to be abed, just close to my bedroom window is the club room of a public house, where a set of singers, I take them to be chorus-singers of the two theatres (it

must be *both of them*), begin their orgies. They are a set of fellows (as I conceive) who being limited by their talents to the burthen of the song at the play-houses, in revenge have got the common popular airs by Bishop or some cheap composer arranged for choruses, that is, to be sung all in chorus. At least I never can catch any of the text of the plain song, nothing but the Babylonish choral howl at the tail on 't. "That fury being quench'd" — the howl I mean — a curseder burden succeeds, of shouts and clapping and knocking of the table. At length overtasked nature drops under it, and escapes for a few hours into the society of the sweet silent creatures of dreams, which go away with mocks and mows at cockcrow. And then I think of the words Christabel's father used (bless me, I have dipt in the wrong ink) to say every morning by way of variety when he awoke, —

Every knell, the Baron saith,
Wakes us up to a world of death, —

or something like it.

All I mean by this senseless interrupted tale is, that by my central situation I am a little over-companied. Not that I have any animosity against the good creatures that are so anxious to drive away the harpy solitude from me. I like 'em, and cards, and a chearful glass, but I mean merely to give you an idea between office confinement and after-office society, — how little time I can call my own. I mean only to draw a picture, not

to make an inference. I would not that I know of have it otherwise. I only wish sometimes I could exchange some of my faces and voices for the faces and voices which a late visitation brought most welcome and carried away leaving regret, but more pleasure, even a kind of gratitude, at being so often favoured with that kind northern visitation. My London faces and noises don't hear me — I mean no disrespect — or I should explain myself that instead of their return 220 times a year and the return of W. W. &c. seven times in 104 weeks, some more equal distribution might be found. I have scarce room to put in Mary's kind love and my poor name,

CH. LAMB

This to be read last: W. H. goes on lecturing against W. W. and making copious use of quotations from said W. W. to give a zest to said lectures. S. T. C. is lecturing with success. I have not heard either him or H., but I dined with S. T. C. at Gilman's a Sunday or two since and he was well and in good spirits. I mean to hear some of the course, but lectures are not much to my taste, whatever the lecturer may be. If *read*, they are dismal flat, and you can't think why you are brought together to hear a man read his works which you could read so much better at leisure yourself; if delivered extempore, I am always in pain lest the gift of utterance should suddenly fail the orator in the middle, as it did

me at the dinner given in honour of me at the London Tavern. "Gentlemen," said I, and there I stopt, — the rest my feelings were under the necessity of supplying. Mrs. Wordsworth *will* go on, kindly haunting us with visions of seeing the lakes once more which never can be realized. Between us there is a great gulf — not of inexplicable moral antipathies and distances, I hope (as there seem'd to be between me and that gentleman concern'd in the Stamp Office that I so strangely coiled up from at Haydon's). I think I had an instinct that he was the head of an office. I hate all such people — accountants, deputy accountants. The dear abstract notion of the East India Company, as long as she is unseen, is pretty, rather poetical; but as *she* makes herself manifest by the persons of such beasts, I loathe and detest her as the scarlet what-do-you-call-her of Babylon. I thought, after abridging us of all our red-letter days, they had done their worst, but I was deceived in the length to which heads of offices, those true liberty-haters, can go. They are the tyrants, not Ferdinand, nor Nero — by a decree past this week, they have abridged us of the immemorially-observed custom of going at one o'clock of a Saturday, the little shadow of a holiday left us. Blast them. I speak it soberly. Dear W. W., be thankful for your liberty.

We have spent two very pleasant evenings lately with Mr. Monkhouse.

CCLXVIII. — TO CHARLES AND JAMES
OLLIER

May 28, 1818.

Dear Sir, — The last sheet is finished. All that remains is the Title page and the Contents, which should be uniform with volume one. Will you be kind enough to see it? There is a sonnet to come in by way of dedication. I have not the sheet, so I cannot make out the Table of Contents, but it may be done from the various essays, letters, &c., by you, or the printer, as thus. [*Here follows a rough sketch of the writer's plan.*] Yours in haste, C. LAMB

Let me see the last proof, sonnet, &c.

CCLXIX. — TO CHARLES AND JAMES
OLLIER

June 18, 1818.

Dear Sir (whichever opens it), — I am going off to Birmingham. I find my books, whatever faculty of selling they may have (I wish they had more for $\left\{ \begin{smallmatrix} \text{your} \\ \text{my} \end{smallmatrix} \right\}$ sake), are admirably adapted for giving away. You have been bounteous. *Six* more and I shall have satisfied all just claims. Am I taking too great a liberty in begging you to send four as follows, and reserve two for me when I come home? That will make thirty-one. Thirty-one times twelve is 372 shillings —

eighteen pounds twelve shillings!!! — but here are my friends, to whom, if you *could* transmit them, as I shall be away a month, you will greatly oblige the obliged,

C. LAMB

Mr. Ayrton, James Street, Buckingham Gate;
Mr. Alsager, Suffolk Street East, Southwark,
by Horsemonger Lane;
and in one parcel directed to R. Southey, Esq.
Keswick, Cumberland;
one for R. S.; and one for W^m. Wordsworth,
Esq^r.

If you will be kind enough simply to write “from the Author” in all four, you will still further, etc. —

Either Longman or Murray is in the frequent habit of sending books to Southey, and will take charge of the parcel. It will be as well to write in at the beginning thus:

R. Southey, Esq., from the Author.

W. Wordsworth, Esq., from the Author.

Then, if I can find the remaining two, left for me at Russell Street when I return, rather than encroach any more on the heap, I will engage to make no more new friends *ad infinitum*, *yourselves* being the last.

Yours truly, C. L.

I think Southey will give us a lift in that damn'd *Quarterly*. I meditate an attack upon

that Cobbler Gifford, which shall appear immediately after any favourable mention which S. may make in the *Quarterly*. It can't, in decent *gratitude*, appear *before*.

CCLXX.—TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

October 26, 1818.

Dear Southey,—I am pleased with your friendly remembrances of my little things. I do not know whether I have done a silly thing or a wise one; but it is of no great consequence. I run no risk, and care for no censures. My bread and cheese is stable as the foundations of Leadenhall Street, and if it hold out as long as the “foundations of our empire in the East,” I shall do pretty well. You and W. W. should have had your presentation copies more ceremoniously sent; but I had no copies when I was leaving town for my holidays, and rather than delay, commissioned my bookseller to send them thus nakedly. By not hearing from W. W. or you, I began to be afraid Murray had not sent them.

I do not see S. T. C. so often as I could wish. He never comes to me; and though his host and hostess are very friendly, it puts me out of my way to go see one person at another person's house. It was the same when he resided at Morgan's. Not but they also were more than civil; but after all one feels so welcome at one's own house.

Have you seen poor Miss Betham's *Vignettes*? Some of them, the second particularly, *To Lucy*, are sweet and good as herself, while she was herself. She is in some measure abroad again. I am *better than I deserve* to be. The hot weather has been such a treat! Mary joins in this little corner in kindest remembrances to you all.

C. L.

CCLXXI. — TO S. T. COLERIDGE

December 24, 1818.

My dear Coleridge, — I have been in a state of incessant hurry ever since the receipt of your ticket. It found me incapable of attending you, it being the night of Kenney's new comedy, which has utterly failed. You know my local aptitudes at such a time; I have been a thorough rendezvous for all consultations. My head begins to clear up a little; but it has had bells in it. Thank you kindly for your ticket, though the mournful prognostic which accompanies it certainly renders its permanent pretensions less marketable; but I trust to hear many a course yet. You excepted Christmas week, by which I understood *next week*; I thought Christmas week was that which Christmas Sunday ushered in.

We are sorry it never lies in your way to come to us; but, dear Mahomet, we will come to you. Will it be convenient to all the good people at

Highgate, if we take a stage up, *not next Sunday*, but the following, *viz.*, 3rd January, 1819; shall we be too late to catch a skirt of the old outgoer? How the years crumble from under us! We shall hope to see you before then; but, if not, let us know if *then* will be convenient. Can we secure a coach home?

Believe me ever yours, C. LAMB

I have but one holiday, which is Christmas-day itself nakedly: no pretty garnish and fringes of St. John's day, Holy Innocents &c., that used to bestud it all around in the calendar. *Improbe labor!* I write six hours every day in the candle-light fog-den at Leadheall.

CCLXXII. — TO JOHN CHAMBERS

1818.

Dear C., — I steal a few minutes from a painful and laborious avocation, aggravated by the absence of some that should assist me, to say how extremely happy we should be to see you return clean as the cripple out of the pool of Bethesda. That damn'd scorbutic — how came you by it? You are now fairly a damaged lot; as Venn would say, One Scratched. You might play Scrub in the *Beaux' Stratagem*. The best post your friends could promote you to would be a scrubbing post. "Aye, there 's the rub." I generally get tired after the third rubber. But you, I sup-

pose, tire twice the number every day. First, there's your mother, she begins after breakfast; then your little sister takes it up about luncheon-time, till her bones crack, and some kind neighbour comes in to lend a hand, scrub, scrub, scrub, and nothing will get the intolerable itch (for I am persuaded it is the itch) out of your penance-doing bones. A cursed thing just at this time, when everybody wants to get out of town as well as yourself. Of course, I don't mean to reproach you. You can't help it, the whoreson tingling in your blood. I dare say you would if you could. But don't you think you could do a little work, if you came? as much as D—— does before twelve o'clock. Hang him, there he sits at that cursed *Times* — and latterly he has had the *Berkshire Chronicle* sent him every Tuesday and Friday to get at the county news. Why, that letter which you favoured him with, appears to me to be very well and clearly written. The man that wrote that might make out warrants, or write committees. There was as much in quantity written as would have filled four volumes of the indigo appendix; and when we are so busy as we are, every little helps. But I throw out these observations merely as innuendos. By the way there's a Doctor Lamert in Leadenhall Street, who sells a mixture to purify the blood. No. 114 Leadenhall Street, near the market. But it is necessary that his patients should be on the spot, that he may see them every day.

There's a sale of indigo advertised for July, forty thousand lots—10,000 chests only, but they sell them in quarter chests which makes 40,000. By the bye a droll accident happened here on Thursday. Wadd and Plumley got quarrelling about a kneebuckle of Hyde's which the latter affirmed not to be standard; Wadd was nettled at this, and said something reflecting on tradesmen and shopkeepers, and Plumley struck him. Friend is married; he has married a Roman Catholic, which has offended his family, but they have come to an agreement, that the boys (if they have children) shall be bred up in the father's religion, and the girls in the mother's, which I think equitable enough. I am determined my children shall be brought up in their father's religion, if they can find out what it is. Bye is about publishing a volume of poems which he means to dedicate to Matthie. Methinks he might have found a better Mécenas. They are chiefly amatory, others of them stupid, the greater part very far below mediocrity; but they discover much tender feeling; they are most like Petrarch of any foreign poet, or what we might have supposed Petrarch would have written if Petrarch had been born a fool!

Grinwallows is made master of the ceremonies at Dandelion, near Margate; of course he gives up the office. "My Harry" makes so many faces that it is impossible to sit opposite him without smiling. Dowley danced a quadrille at Court

on the Queen's birthday with Lady Thynne, Lady Desbrow, and Lady Louisa Manners. It is said his performance was graceful and airy. Cabel has taken an unaccountable fancy into his head that he is Fuller, member for Sussex. He imitates his blunt way of speaking. I remain much the same as you remember, very universally beloved and esteemed, possessing everybody's goodwill, and trying at least to deserve it; the same steady adherence to principle, and correct regard for truth, which always marked my conduct, marks it still. If I am singular in anything it is in too great a squeamishness to anything that remotely looks like a falsehood. I am call'd Old Honesty; sometimes Upright Telltruth, Esq., and I own it tickles my vanity a little. The committee have formally abolish'd all holydays whatsoever — for which may the devil, who keeps no holydays, have them in his eternal burning workshop. When I say holydays, I mean calendar holydays, for at Medley's instigation they have agreed to a sort of scale by which the chief has power to give leave of absence, viz. :

Those who have been 50 years and upwards to be absent 4 days in the year, but not without leave of the chief.

35 years and upward, 3 days,

25 years and upward, 2 days,

18 years and upward, 1 day,

which I think very liberal. We are also to sign our name when we *go* as well as when we *come*,

and every quarter of an hour we sign, to show that we are here. Mins and Gardner take it in turn to bring round the book — O here *is* Mins with the Book — no, it's Gardner — “What's that, G.?” “The appearance book, Sir” (with a gentle inclination of his head, and smiling). “What the devil, is the quarter come again?” It annoys Dodwell amazingly; he sometimes has to sign six or seven times while he is reading the newspaper — [Unfinished.]

CCLXXIII. — TO W. WORDSWORTH

April 26, 1819.

Dear Wordsworth, — I received a copy of *Peter Bell* a week ago, and I hope the author will not be offended if I say I do not much relish it. The humour, if it is meant for humour, is forced, and then the price. Sixpence would have been dear for it. Mind, I do not mean *your* “Peter Bell,” but *a* “Peter Bell” which preceded it about a week, and is in every bookseller's shop window in London, the type and paper nothing differing from the true one, the preface signed W. W., and the supplementary preface quoting as the author's words an extract from supplementary preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*. Is there no law against these rascals? I would have this Lambert Simnel whipt at the cart's tail. Then there is Rogers! he has been re-writing your Poem of the Strid, and publishing it at the

end of his *Human Life*. Tie him up to the cart, hangman, while you are about it. Who started the spurious *P. B.*, I have not heard. I should guess, one of the sneering brothers — the vile Smiths — but I have heard no name mentioned. *Peter Bell* (not the mock one) is excellent. For its matter, I mean. I cannot say that the style of it, quite satisfies me. It is too lyrical. The auditors to whom it is feigned to be told, do not *arride me*. I had rather it had been told me, the reader, at once.

Heartleap Well is the tale for me, in matter as good as this, in manner infinitely before it, in my poor judgment. Why did you not add *The Waggoner*? Have I thanked you, though, yet, for *Peter Bell*? I would not *not have it* for a good deal of money. C—— is very foolish to scribble about books. Neither his tongue nor fingers are very retentive. But I shall not say anything to him about it. He would only begin a very long story, with a very long face, and I see him far too seldom to tease him with affairs of business or conscience when I do see him. He never comes near our house, and when we go to see him, he is generally writing, or thinking he is writing, in his study till the dinner comes, and that is scarce over before the stage summons us away.

The mock *P. B.* had only this effect on me, that after twice reading it over in hopes to find *something* diverting in it, I reach'd your two books off the shelf and set into a steady reading

of them, till I had nearly finished both before I went to bed. The two of your last edition, of course, I mean. And in the morning I awoke determining to take down the *Excursion*. I wish the scoundrel imitator could know this. But why waste a wish on him? I do not believe that paddling about with a stick in a pond and fishing up a dead author whom *his* intolerable wrongs had driven to that deed of desperation, would turn the heart of one of these obtuse literary Bells. There is no Cock for such Peters. Damn 'em. I am glad this aspiration came upon the red ink line. [*This letter is written in red and black ink, alternating with each line.*] It is more of a bloody curse.

I have delivered over your other presents to Alsager and G. D. — A. I am sure will value it and be proud of the hand from which it came. To G. D. a poem is a poem. His own as good as any bodie's, and God bless him, any bodie's as good as his own, for I do not think he has the most distant guess of the possibility of one poem being better than another. The gods by denying him the very faculty itself of discrimination have effectually cut off every seed of envy in his bosom. But with envy, they excided curiosity also, and if you wish the copy again, which you destined for him, I think I shall be able to find it again for you — on his third shelf, where he stuffs his presentation copies, uncut, in shape and matter resembling a lump of dry dust, but on carefully removing that stratum, a thing like

a pamphlet will emerge. I have tried this with fifty different poetical works that have been given G. D. in return for as many of his own performances, and I confess I never had any scruple in taking *my own* again wherever I found it, shaking the adherences off — and by this means one copy of “my works” served for G. D. and with a little dusting was made over to my good friend Dr. Stoddart, who little thought whose leavings he was taking when he made me that graceful bow. By the way, the Doctor is the only one of my acquaintance who bows gracefully, my town acquaintance I mean.

How do you like my way of writing with two inks? I think it is pretty and motley. Suppose Mrs. W. adopts it, the next time she holds the pen for you.

My dinner waits. I have no time to indulge any longer in these laborious curiosities. God bless you and cause to thrive and to burgeon whatsoever you write, and fear no inks of miserable poetasters.

Yours truly,

CHARLES LAMB

Mary's love.

CCLXXIV.—TO JOHN RICKMAN

May 21, 1819.

Dear Rickman, — The gentleman who will present this letter holds a situation of considerable importance in the East India House, and is my

very good friend. He is desirous of knowing whether it is too late to amend a mere error in figures which he has just discovered in an account made out by him and laid before the house yesterday. He will best explain to you what he means, and I am sure you will help him to the best of your power. Phillips is too ill for me to think of applying to him.

Why did we not see you last night?

Yours truly, CHARLES LAMB

CCLXXV.—TO THOMAS MANNING

May 28, 1819.

My dear M.,—I want to know how your brother is, if you have heard lately. I want to know about you. I wish you were nearer. C. Lloyd is in town with Mrs. Ll[oyd], anxious of course to see you. She is come for a few days, and projects leaving him here in the care of a man. I fear he will launch out, and heartily wish the scene of his possible exploits were at a remoter distance. But she does not know what to do with him. He run away the other day to come to London alone, but was intercepted, and now she has brought him. I wish people would n't be mad. Could you take a run up to look at him? Would you like to see him? or isn't it better to lean over a style [stile] in a sort of careless, easy, half astronomical position, eyeing the blue expanse? How are my cousins, the Gladmans of

Wheathamstead, and farmer Bruton? Mrs. Bruton is a glorious woman.

Hail, Mackeray End —

This is a fragment of a blank verse poem which I once meditated, but got no further. The E. I. H. has been thrown into a quandary by the strange phenomenon of poor Tommy Bye, whom I have known man and madman twenty-seven years, he being elder here than myself by nine years and more. He was always a pleasant, gossiping, half-headed, muzzy, dozing, dreaming, walk-about, inoffensive chap; a little too fond of the creature — who is n't at times? but Tommy had not brains to work off an over-night's surfeit by ten o'clock next morning, and unfortunately, in he wandered the other morning drunk with last night, and with a superfætation of drink taken in since he set out from bed. He came staggering under his double burthen, like trees in Java, bearing at once blossom, fruit, and falling fruit, as I have heard you *or* some other traveller tell, with his face literally as blue as the bluest firmament; some wretched calico that he had mopped his poor oozy front with had rendered up its native dye, and the devil a bit would he consent to wash it, but swore it was characteristic, for he was going to the sale of *indigo*, and set up a laugh which I did not think the lungs of mortal man were competent to. It was like a thousand people laughing, or the goblin page. He imag-

ined afterwards that the whole office had been laughing at him, so strange did his own sounds strike upon his *nonsensorium*. But Tommy has laughed his last laugh, and awoke the next day to find himself reduced from an abused income of £600 per annum to one-sixth of the sum, after thirty-six years' tolerable good service. The quality of mercy was not strain'd in his behalf; the gentle dews dropt not on him from heaven.

It just came across me that I was writing to Canton. How is Ball? "Mr. B. is a P——." Will you drop in to-morrow night? Fanny K[elly] is coming, if she does not cheat us. Mrs. Gold is well, but proves "*uncoined*," as the lovers about Wheathampstead would say.

O hard-hearted Burrel
With teeth like a squirrell —

I have not had such a quiet half hour to sit down to a quiet letter for many years. I have not been interrupted above four times. I wrote a letter the other day in alternate lines, black ink and red, and you cannot think how it chilled the flow of ideas. Next Monday is Whitmonday. What a reflexion! Twelve years ago, and I should have kept that and the following holyday in the fields a-Maying. All of those pretty pastoral delights are over. This dead, everlasting dead desk — how it weighs the spirit of a gentleman down! This dead wood of the desk instead of your living trees! But then, again,

I hate the Joskins, a name for *Hertfordshire bumpkins*. Each state of life has its inconvenience; but then, again, mine has more than one. Not that I repine, or grudge, or murmur at my destiny. I have meat and drink, and decent apparel; I shall, at least, when I get a new hat.

A red-haired man just interrupted me. He has broke the current of my thoughts. I have n't a word to add. I don't know why I send this letter, but I have had a hankering to hear about you some days. Perhaps it will go off, before your reply comes. If it don't, I assure you no letter was ever welcomer from you, from Paris or Macao.

C. LAMB

CCLXXVI.—TO W. WORDSWORTH

June 7, 1819.

My dear Wordsworth, — You cannot imagine how proud we are here of the dedication. We read it twice for once that we do the poem. I mean all through; yet *Benjamin* is no common favourite; there is a spirit of beautiful tolerance in it. It is as good as it was in 1806; and will be as good in 1829, if our dim eyes shall be awake to peruse it.

Methinks there is a kind of shadowing affinity between the subject of the narrative and the subject of the dedication; but I will not enter into personal themes; else, substituting * * * * *

* * * * * [Charles Lamb] for Ben, and the Honour-

able United Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies, for the master of the misused team, it might seem by no far-fetched analogy to point its dim warnings hitherward; but I reject the omen, especially as its import seems to have been diverted to another victim.

Poor Tommy Bye, whom I have known (as I express'd it in a letter to Manning), man and madman twenty-seven years—he was my gossip in Leadenhall Street—but too much addicted to turn in at a red lattice—came wandering into his and my common scene of business—you have seen the orderly place—reeling drunk at nine o'clock—with his face of a deep blue, contracted by a filthy dowlas muckinger which had given up its dye to his poor oozy visnomy—and short to tell, after playing various pranks, laughing loud laughters three—mad explosions they were—in the following morning the “tear stood in his ee”—for he found his abused income of clear £600 inexorably reduced to £100—he was my dear gossip—alas! *Benjamin!*

I will never write another letter with alternate inks. You cannot imagine how it cramps the flow of the style. I can conceive Pindar (I do not mean to compare myself to *him*), by the command of Hiero, the Sicilian tyrant (was not he the tyrant of some place? fie on my neglect of history!) I can conceive him by command of Hiero, or Perillus, set down to pen an Isthmian or Nemean Panegyre in lines alternate red and

black. I maintain he could n't have done it; it would have been a strait-laced torture to his muse, he would have call'd for the bull for a relief. Neither could Lycidas, or the Chorics (how do you like the word?) of Samson Agonistes, have been written with two inks.

Your couplets with points, epilogues to *Mr. H.'s*, &c., might be even benefited by the twy-fount, where one line (the second) is for point, and the first for rhyme, I think the alternation would assist, like a mould. I maintain it, you could not have written your stanzas on pre-existence with two inks. Try another, and Rogers the banker, with his silver standish having one ink only, I will bet my *Ode on Tobacco*, against the *Pleasures of Memory* — and *Hope* too — shall put more fervour of enthusiasm into the same subject than you can with your two; he shall do it *stans pede in uno*, as it were.

The Waggoner is very ill put up in boards, at least it seems to me always to open at the dedication; but that is a mechanical fault.

I re-read the *White Doe of Rylston* — the title should be always written at length, as Mary Sabilla Novello, a very nice woman of our acquaintance, always signs hers at the bottom of the shortest note. Mary told her, if her name had been Mary Ann, she would have signed M. A. Novello, or M. only, dropping the A.; which makes me think, with some other triflings, that she understands something of human nature.

My pen goes galloping on most rhapsodically, glad to have escaped the bondage of two inks.

Manning had just sent it home and it came as fresh to me as the immortal creature it speaks of. M. sent it home with a note, having this passage in it, "I cannot help writing to you while I am reading Wordsworth's poem. I am got into the third canto, and say that it raises my opinion of him very much indeed.* 'Tis broad, noble, poetical, with a masterly scanning of human actions, absolutely above common readers. What a manly (implied) interpretation of (bad) party-actions, as trampling the Bible, &c." — and so he goes on.

* N. B. M—— from his peregrinations is twelve or fourteen years *behind* in his knowledge of who has or has not written good verse of late.

I do not know which I like best, the prologue (the latter part specially) to *P. Bell*, or the epilogue to *Benjamin*. Yes, I tell stories, I do know. I like the last best, and the *Waggoner* altogether as a pleasanter remembrance to me than the *Itinerant*. If it were not, the page before the first page would and ought to make it so.

The sonnets are not all new to me. Of what are, the ninth I like best. Thank you for that to Walton. I take it as a favour done to me, that, being so old a darling of mine, you should bear testimony to his worth in a book containing a *dedi*——

I cannot write the vain word at full length any longer.

If, as you say, the *Waggoner* in some sort came at my call, O for a potent voice to call forth the *Recluse* from his profound dormitory, where he sleeps forgetful of his foolish charge—the world!

Had I three inks I would invoke him!

Talfourd has written a most kind review of *J. Woodvil, &c.*, in the *Champion*. He is your most zealous admirer, in solitude and in crowds. H. Crabbe Robinson gives me any dear prints that I happen to admire, and I love him for it and for other things. Alsager shall have his copy, but at present I have lent it *for a day only*, not chusing to part with my own. Mary's love. How do you all do, amanuenses both—marital and sororal?

C. LAMB

NOTE

[Wordsworth had just brought out *The Waggoner*, which was dedicated to Lamb.—ED.]

CCLXXVII.—TO FANNY KELLY

July 20, 1819.

Dear Miss Kelly,—We had the pleasure (*pain*, I might better call it) of seeing you last night in the new play. It was a most consummate piece of acting, but what a task for you to undergo! at a time when your heart is sore from real sorrow! it has given rise to a train of thinking, which I cannot suppress.

Would to God you were released from this way of life; that you could bring your mind to consent to take your lot with us, and throw off for ever the whole burden of your profession. I neither expect or wish you to take notice of this which I am writing, in your present over-occupied and hurried state; but to think of it at your leisure. I have quite income enough, if that were all, to justify me for making such a proposal, with what I may call even a handsome provision for my survivor. What you possess of your own would naturally be appropriated to those for whose sakes chiefly you have made so many hard sacrifices. I am not so foolish as not to know that I am a most unworthy match for such a one as you, but you have for years been a principal object in my mind. In many a sweet assumed character I have learned to love you, but simply as F. M. Kelly I love you better than them all. Can you quit these shadows of existence, and come and be a reality to us? can you leave off harassing yourself to please a thankless multitude, who know nothing of you, and begin at last to live to yourself and your friends?

As plainly and frankly as I have seen you give or refuse assent in some feigned scene, so frankly do me the justice to answer me. It is impossible I should feel injured or aggrieved by your telling me at once, that the proposal does not suit you. It is impossible that I should ever think of molesting you with idle importunity and persecution

after your mind [was] once firmly spoken — but happier, far happier, could I have leave to hope a time might come, when our friends might be your friends; our interests yours; our book-knowledge, if in that inconsiderable particular we have any little advantage, might impart something to you, which you would every day have it in your power ten thousandfold to repay by the added cheerfulness and joy which you could not fail to bring as a dowry into whatever family should have the honour and happiness of receiving *you*, the most welcome accession that could be made to it.

In haste, but with entire respect and deepest affection, I subscribe myself, C. LAMB

NOTE

[This was Miss Kelly's reply :

HENRIETTA STREET, July 20, 1819.

An early and deeply rooted attachment has fixed my heart on one from whom no worldly prospect can well induce me to withdraw it, but while I thus *frankly* and decidedly decline your proposal, believe me, I am not insensible to the high honour which the preference of such a mind as yours confers upon me — let me, however, hope that all thought upon this subject will end with this letter, and that you will henceforth encourage no other sentiment towards me than esteem in my private character and a continuance of that approbation of my humble talents which you have already expressed so much and so often to my advantage and gratification.

Believe me I feel proud to acknowledge myself,

Your obliged friend, F. M. KELLY.]

CCLXXVIII. — TO FANNY KELLY

July 20, 1819.

Dear Miss Kelly, — *Your injunctions shall be obeyed to a tittle.* I feel myself in a lackadaisical

no-how-ish kind of a humour. I believe it is the rain, or something. I had thought to have written seriously, but I fancy I succeed best in epistles of mere fun; puns and *that* nonsense. You will be good friends with us, will you not? let what has past "break no bones" between us. You will not refuse us them next time we send for them? Yours very truly,
C. L.

Do you observe the delicacy of not signing my full name? N. B. Do not paste that last letter of mine into your book.

NOTE

[Writing again of Miss Kelly, in the *Hypocrite*, in *The Examiner* of August 1 and 2, Lamb says: "She is in truth not framed to tease or torment even in jest, but to utter a hearty *Yes* or *No*; to yield or refuse assent with a noble sincerity. We have not the pleasure of being acquainted with her, but we have been told that she carries the same cordial manners into private life."

Miss Kelly died unmarried at the age of ninety-two.

"Break no bones." Here Lamb makes one of his puns. By "bones" he meant also the little ivory discs which were given to friends of the management, entitling them to free entry to the theatre. With this explanation the next sentence of the letter becomes clear.]

CCLXXIX.— TO SAMUEL JAMES ARNOLD

No date. (?) 1819.

Dear Sir, — We beg to convey our kindest acknowledgements to Mr. Arnold for the very

pleasant privilege he has favoured us with. My yearly holidays end with next week, during which we shall be mostly in the country, and afterwards avail ourselves fully of the privilege. Sincerely wishing you crowded houses, &c., we remain,

Yours truly, CH. & M. LAMB

NOTE

[Arnold, brother-in-law of Ayrton, was the lessee of the Lyceum, where Miss Kelly was acting when Lamb proposed to her in 1819. This letter may belong to that time. — E. V. LUCAS.]

CCLXXX. — TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Summer, 1819.

Dear C., — Your sonnet is capital. The paper ingenious, only that it split into four parts (besides a side splinter) in the carriage. I have transferred it to the common English paper, *manufactured of rags*, for better preservation. I never knew before how the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were written. 'T is strikingly corroborated by observations on cats. These domestic animals, put 'em on a rug before the fire, wink their eyes up and listen to the kettle, and then *purr*, which is their poetry.

On Sunday week we kiss your hands (if they are clean). This next Sunday I have been engaged for some time.

With rememb'ces to your good host and hostess. Yours ever, C. LAMB

CCLXXXI. — TO THOMAS HOLCROFT, JR.

Autumn, 1819.

Dear Tom, — Do not come to us on Thursday, for we are moved into country lodgings, tho' I am still at the India House in the mornings. See Marshall and Captain Betham *as soon as ever you can*. I fear leave cannot be obtained at the India House for your going to India. If you go it must be as captain's clerk, if such a thing could be obtain'd.

For God's sake keep your present place and do not give it up, or neglect it; as you perhaps will not be able to go to India, and you see how difficult of attainment situations are.

Yours truly, C. LAMB

CCLXXXII. — TO JOSEPH COTTLE

November 5, 1819.

Dear Sir, — It is so long since I have seen or heard from you, that I fear that you will consider a request I have to make as impertinent. About three years since, when I was one day at Bristol, I made an effort to see you, but you were from home. The request I have to make is, that you would very much oblige me, if you have any small portrait of yourself, by allowing me to have it copied, to accompany a selection of Likenesses of Living Bards which a most particular friend of mine is making. If you have no objections,

and could oblige me by transmitting such portrait to me at No. 44 Russell Street, Covent Garden, I will answer for taking the greatest care of it, and returning it safely the instant the copier has done with it. I hope you will pardon the liberty.

From an old friend, and well-wisher,

CHARLES LAMB

CCLXXXIII.—TO JOSEPH COTTLE

Late 1819.

Dear Sir,— My friend whom you have obliged by the loan of your picture, having had it very exactly copied (and a very spirited drawing it is, as every one thinks that has seen it—the copy is not much inferior, done by a daughter of Josephs, R. A.), he purposes sending you back the original, which I must accompany with my warm thanks, both for that, and your better favour, the *Messiah*, which, I assure you, I have read thro' with great pleasure; the verses have great sweetness and a New Testament-plainness about them which affected me very much.

I could just wish that in page 63 you had omitted the lines 71 and 72, and had ended the period with,—

The willowy brook was there, but that sweet sound —
When to be heard again on earthly ground ?

Two very sweet lines, and the sense perfect.

And in page 154, line 68, —

He spake, I come, ordain'd a world to save,
To be baptized by thee in Jordan's wave.

These words are hardly borne out by the story, and seem scarce accordant with the modesty with which our Lord came to take his common portion among the baptismal candidates. They also anticipate the beauty of John's recognition of the Messiah, and the subsequent confirmation from the Voice and Dove.

You will excuse the remarks of an old brother bard, whose career, though long since pretty well stopt, was coeval in its beginning with your own, and who is sorry his lot has been always to be so distant from you. It is not likely that C. L. will ever see Bristol again; but, if J. C. should ever visit London, he will be a most welcome visitor to C. L.

My sister joins in cordial remembrances, and I request the favour of knowing, at your earliest opportunity, whether the portrait arrives safe, glass unbroken, &c. Your glass broke in its coming.

Morgan is a little better — can read a little, &c.; but cannot join Mrs. M. till the Insolvent Act (or whatever it is called) takes place. Then, I hope, he will stand clear of all debts. Meantime, he has a most exemplary nurse and kind companion in Miss Brent.

Once more, dear sir, yours truly,

C. LAMB

CCLXXXIV. — TO DOROTHY WORDS-
WORTH

November 25, 1819.

Dear Miss Wordsworth, — You will think me negligent, but I wanted to see more of Willy, before I ventured to express a prediction. Till yesterday I had barely seen him — *Virgilium tantum vidi* — but yesterday he gave us his small company to a bullock's heart — and I can pronounce him a lad of promise. He is no pedant nor bookworm, so far I can answer. Perhaps he has hitherto paid too little attention to other men's inventions, preferring, like Lord Foppington, the "natural sprouts of his own." But he has observation, and seems thoroughly awake. I am ill at remembering other people's *bon mots*, but the following are a few. Being taken over Waterloo Bridge, he remarked that if we had no mountains, we had a fine river at least, which was a touch of the comparative, but then he added, in a strain which augured less for his future abilities as a political economist, that he supposed they must take at least a pound a week toll. Like a curious naturalist he inquired if the tide did not come up a little *salty*. This being satisfactorily answered, he put another question as to the flux and reflux, which being rather cunningly evaded than artfully solved by that she-Aristotle Mary, who muttered something about its getting up an hour sooner and sooner every day, he sagely

replied, "Then it must come to the same thing at last," which was a speech worthy of an infant Halley!

The lion in the 'Change by no means came up to his ideal standard. So impossible it is for Nature in any of her works to come up to the standard of a child's imagination. The whelps (lionets) he was sorry to find were dead, and on particular inquiry his old friend the ouran-outang had gone the way of all flesh also. The grand tiger was also sick, and expected in no short time to exchange this transitory world for another, or none. But again, there was a golden eagle (I do not mean that of Charing) which did much *ar-r-ride* and console him. William's genius, I take it, leans a little to the figurative, for being at play at tricktrack (a kind of minor billiard-table which we keep for smaller wights, and sometimes refresh our own mature fatigues with taking a hand at), not being able to hit a ball he had iterate aimed at, he cried out, "I cannot hit that beast." Now the balls are usually called men, but he felicitously hit upon a middle term, a term of approximation and imaginative reconciliation, a something where the two ends, of the brute matter (ivory) and their human and rather violent personification into *men*, might meet, as I take it illustrative of that excellent remark in a certain preface about imagination, explaining, "like a sea-beast that had crawled forth to sun himself." Not that I accuse William Minor of hereditary

plagiary, or conceive the image to have come *ex traduce*. Rather he seemeth to keep aloof from any source of imitation, and purposely to remain ignorant of what mighty poets have done in this kind before him. For being asked if his father had ever been on Westminster Bridge, he answer'd that he did not know.

It is hard to discern the oak in the acorn, or a temple like St. Paul's in the first stone which is laid, nor can I quite prefigure what destination the genius of William Minor hath to take. Some few hints I have set down, to guide my future observations. He hath the power of calculation in no ordinary degree for a chit. He combineth figures, after the first boggle, rapidly. As in the tricktrack board, where the hits are figured, at first he did not perceive that 15 and 7 made 22, but by a little use he could combine 8 with 25 — and 33 again with 16, which approacheth something in kind (far let me be from flattering him by saying in degree) to that of the famous American boy. I am sometimes inclined to think I perceive the future satirist in him, for he hath a sub-sardonic smile which bursteth out upon occasion, as when he was asked if London were as big as Ambleside, and indeed no other answer was given, or proper to be given, to so ensnaring and provoking a question. In the contour of scull certainly I discern something paternal. But whether in all respects the future man shall transcend his father's fame, Time, the trier of

geniuses, must decide. Be it pronounced peremptorily at present, that Willy is a well-manner'd child, and though no great student, hath yet a lively eye for things that lie before him.

Given in haste from my desk at Leadenhall.
Yours and yours most sincerely, C. LAMB

NOTE

[This letter, which refers to a visit paid to the Lambs in Great Russell Street by Wordsworth's son, William, then nine years old, is remarkable, apart from its charm and humour, for containing more of the absolute method of certain of Lamb's *Elia* passages than anything he had yet written. — E. V. LUCAS.]

CCLXXXV.—TO S. T. COLERIDGE

January 10, 1820.

Dear Coleridge, — A letter written in the blood¹ of your poor friend would indeed be of a nature to startle you; but this is nought but harmless red ink, or, as the witty mercantile phrase hath it, *clerk's blood*. Damn 'em! my brain, guts, skin, flesh, bone, carcase, soul, TIME, is all theirs. The Royal Exchange, Gresham's Folly, hath me body and spirit.

I admire some of Lloyd's lines on you, and I admire your postponing reading them. He is a sad Tattler, but this is under the rose. Twenty years ago he estranged one friend from me quite, whom I have been regretting but never could

¹ This letter was written in red ink. — Ed.

regain since ; he almost alienated you (also) from me, or me from you, I don't know which. But that breach is closed. The dreary sea is filled up. He has lately been at work "telling again," as they call it, a most gratuitous piece of mischief, and has caused a coolness betwixt me and (not friend exactly, but) intimate acquaintance. I suspect, also, he saps Manning's faith in me, who am to Manning more than an acquaintance. Still I like his writing verses about you. Will your kind host and hostess give us a dinner next Sunday, and better still, *not expect us* if the weather is very bad? Why you should refuse twenty g[uinea]s per sheet for *Blackwood's* or any other magazine passes my poor comprehension. But, as Strap says, you know best. I have no quarrel with you about præprandial avocations—so don't imagine one. That Manchester sonnet I think very likely is Capel [Lofft's]. Another sonnet appeared with the same initials in the same paper, which turned out to be Procter's. What do the rascals mean? Am I to have the fathering of what idle rhymes every beggarly poetaster pours forth! Who put your marine sonnet and "about Browne" into *Blackwood's*? I did not. [*Line obliterated by author.*] So no more, till we meet.

Ever yours,

C. L.

CCLXXXVI. — TO THOMAS ALLSOP

January 10, 1820.

Dear Sir, — We expected you here to-night ; but as you have invited us to-morrow evening, we shall dispose of this evening as we intended to have done of to-morrow. We shall be with you by eight, and shall have taken tea.

Your (not obliging but obliged)

C. AND M. LAMB

CCLXXXVII. — TO THOMAS ALLSOP

February 15, 1820.

Dear Sir, — I have brought you *Rosamund*, Bp. of Landaff's daughter's novel. We shall have a small party, on Thursday evening, if you will do us the favour to join it.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB

CCLXXXVIII. — TO DOROTHY WORDS-
WORTH

May 25, 1820.

Dear Miss W., — I have volunteered to reply to your note because of a mistake I am desirous of rectifying on the spot. There can be none to whom the last volume of W. W. has come more welcome than to me. I have traced the Duddon in thought and with repetition along the banks (alas!) of the Lea — (unpoetical name): it is

always flowing and murmuring in my ears. The story of *Dion* is divine — the genius of Plato falling on him like moonlight — the finest thing ever expressed.

Then there is *Elidure* and *Kirkstone Pass* — the last not new to me — and let me add one of the sweetest of all to me, *The Longest Day*. Loving all these as much as I can love poetry, new to me, what could I wish or desire or extravagantly desiderate in a new volume? That I did not write to W. W. was simply that he was to come so soon, and that flattens letters.

I admired your averted looks on Saturday. You did not observe M. Burney's averted look also? You might have been supposed two antipathies, or quarrelled lovers. The fact was, M. B. had a black eye he was desirous of concealing — an artificial one I mean, not of nature's making, but of art's reflecting, for nobody quarrels with the black eyes the former gives — but it was curious to see you both ashamed of such panegyric objects as black eyes and white teeth have always been considered. * * * Mary is not here to see the stuff I write, else she would snatch the pen out of my hand and conclude with some sober kind messages.

We sincerely wish your brother better.

Yours, both of us kindly,

C. L. AND M. L.

CCLXXXIX. — TO THOMAS ALLSOP

[No date.]

Dear Sir, — We expect Wordsworth tomorrow evening. Will you look in? C. L.

CCXC. — TO JOSEPH COTTLE

May 26, 1820.

My dear Sir, — I am quite ashamed of not having acknowledged your kind present earlier, but that unknown something, which was never yet discovered, though so often speculated upon, which stands in the way of lazy folks answering letters, has presented its usual obstacle. It is not forgetfulness, nor disrespect, nor incivility, but terribly like all these bad things.

I have been in my time a great epistolary scribbler; but the passion, and with it the facility, at length wears out; and it must be pumped up again by the heavy machinery of duty or gratitude, when it should run free.

I have read your *Fall of Cambria* with as much pleasure as I did your *Messiah*. Your Cambrian poem I shall be tempted to repeat oftenest, as Human poems take me in a mood more frequently congenial than Divine. The character of Llewellyn pleases me more than anything else, perhaps; and then some of the lyrical pieces are fine varieties.

It was quite a mistake that I could dislike any-

thing you should write against Lord Byron, for I have a thorough aversion to his character and a very moderate admiration of his genius; he is great in so little a way. To be a poet is to be the man — not a petty portion of occasional low passion worked up into a permanent form of humanity. Shakespear has thrust such rubbishy feelings into a corner — the dark, dusky heart of Don John, in the *Much Ado about Nothing*. The fact is, I have not seen your *Expostulatory Epistle* to him. I was not aware, till your question, that it was out. I shall inquire, and get it forthwith.

Southey is in town, whom I have seen slightly; Wordsworth expected, whom I hope to see much of. I write with accelerated motion; for I have two or three bothering clerks and brokers about me, who always press in proportion as you seem to be doing something that is not business. I could exclaim a little profanely, but I think you do not like swearing.

I conclude, begging you to consider that I feel myself much obliged by your kindness, and shall be most happy at any and at all times to hear from you. Dear Sir, yours truly, CHARLES LAMB

CCXCI. — TO THOMAS ALLSOP

June, 1820.

Dear Sir, — Wordsworth is with us this even. Can you come? We leave Covent Garden on Thursday for some time. C. L.

CCXCII. — TO THOMAS ALLSOP

July 13, 1820.

Dear Sir, — I do not know whose fault it is we have not met so long. We are almost always out of town. You must come and beat up our quarters there, when we return from Cambridge. It is not in our power to accept your invitation. To-day we dine out; and set out for Cambridge on Saturday morning. Friday of course will be past in packing, &c., moreover we go from Dalston. We return from Cambridge in four weeks, and will contrive an early meeting. Meantime believe us,

Sincerely yours, C. L., &c.

CCXCIII. — TO BARRON FIELD

August 16, 1820.

Dear Field, — Captain Ogilvie, who conveys this note to you, and is now paying for the first time a visit to your remote shores, is the brother of a gentleman intimately connected with the family of the *Whites*, I mean of Bishopsgate Street — and you will much oblige them and myself by any service or civilities you can shew him.

I do not mean this for an answer to your warm-hearted epistle, which demands and shall have a much fuller return. We received your *Australian First Fruits*, of which I shall say nothing here,

but refer you to * * * * [see explanatory note] of the *Examiner*, who speaks our mind on all public subjects. I can only assure you that both Coleridge and Wordsworth, and also C. Lloyd, who has lately reappeared in the poetical horizon, were hugely taken with your *Kangaroo*.

When do you come back full of riches and renown, with the regret of all the honest, and all the other part of the colony? Mary swears she shall live to see it.

Pray are you King's or Queen's men in Sydney? Or have thieves no politics? Man, don't let this lie about your room for your bed sweeper or Major Domo to see, he may n't like the last paragraph.

This is a dull and lifeless scroll. You shall have soon a tissue of truth and fiction impossible to be extricated, the interleavings shall be so delicate, the partitions perfectly invisible, it shall puzzle you till you return, and I will not explain it. Till then a * * * adieu, with kind remembrances of me both to you. * * * [*Signature and a few words torn off.*]

NOTE

[Barron Field, who was still in New South Wales, had published his poems under the title *First-Fruits of Australian Poetry*, and Lamb had reviewed them in *The Examiner* for January 16, 1820, over his usual signature in that paper, " * * * * " "The Kangaroo" is quoted in that review.— E. V. LUCAS.]

CCXCIV.— TO JOHN SCOTT

August 24, 1820.

Dear Sir, — I sent you yesterday by the second post two small copies of verses directed by mistake to N. 8 York Street. If you have *not* received them, pray favour me with a line. From your not writing, I shall conclude you have got them. Yours respectfully, C. LAMB

CCXCV.— TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Autumn, 1820.

Dear C., — Why will you make your visits, which should give pleasure, matter of regret to your friends? You never come but you take away some folio that is part of my existence. With a great deal of difficulty I was made to comprehend the extent of my loss. My maid Becky brought me a dirty bit of paper, which contained her description of some book which Mr. Coleridge had taken away. It was *Luster's Tables*, which, for some time, I could not make out. "What! has he carried away any of the *tables*, Becky?" "No, it was n't any tables, but it was a book that he called *Luster's Tables*." I was obliged to search personally among my shelves, and a huge fissure suddenly disclosed to me the true nature of the damage I had sustained. That book, C., you should not have taken away, for it is not mine; it is the property of a friend, who does not know

its value, nor indeed have I been very sedulous in explaining to him the estimate of it; but was rather contented in giving a sort of corroboration to a hint that he let fall, as to its being suspected to be not genuine, so that in all probability it would have fallen to me as a deodand; not but I am as sure it is Luther's as I am sure that Jack Bunyan wrote the *Pilgrim's Progress*; but it was not for me to pronounce upon the validity of testimony that had been disputed by learned clerks than I. So I quietly let it occupy the place it had usurped upon my shelves, and should never have thought of issuing an ejectment against it; for why should I be so bigoted as to allow rites of hospitality to none but my own books, children, &c. ?—a species of egotism I abhor from my heart. No; let 'em all snug together, Hebrews and Proselytes of the gate; no selfish partiality of mine shall make distinction between them; I charge no warehouse-room for my friends' commodities; they are welcome to come and stay as long as they like, without paying rent. I have several such strangers that I treat with more than Arabian courtesy; there's a copy of More's fine poem, which is none of mine. But I cherish it as my own; I am none of those churlish landlords that advertise the goods to be taken away in ten days' time, or then to be sold to pay expenses. So you see I had no right to lend you that book; I may lend you my own books, because it is at my own hazard, but it is not honest to hazard a

friend's property ; I always make that distinction. I hope you will bring it with you, or send it by Hartley ; or he can bring that, and you the *Polemical Discourses*, and come and eat some atoning mutton with us one of these days shortly. We are engaged two or three Sundays deep, but always dine at home on week-days at half-past four. So come all four — men and books I mean — my third shelf (northern compartment) from the top has two devilish gaps, where you have knocked out its two eye-teeth.

Your wronged friend, C. LAMB

CCXCVI.— TO THOMAS ALLSOP

1820.

Dear Sir, — We had arranged to be in country Saturday and Sunday, having made an engagement to that effect. Pray let us see you on Thursday at Russell House.

With regrets and all proper feelings,

Yours truly, C. L.

CCXCVII.— TO THOMAS ALLSOP

Dear Sir, — You shall see us on Thursday, with M. B., if possible, about eight. We shall have teaed. Yours truly, C. L.

M. B.'s direction is 26 James Street, Westminster — James, not St. James, Street.

CCXCVIII.— TO DOROTHY WORDS-
WORTH

January 8, 1821.

Mary perfectly approves of the appropriation of the *feathers*, and wishes them peacocks for your fair niece's sake!

Dear Miss Wordsworth, — I had just written the above endearing words when Monkhouse tapped me on the shoulder with an invitation to cold goose pye, which I was not bird of that sort enough to decline. Mrs. M., I am most happy to say, is better. Mary has been tormented with a rheumatism, which is leaving her. I am suffering from the festivities of the season. I wonder how my misused carcass holds it out. I have play'd the experimental philosopher on it, that's certain. Willy shall be welcome to a mince pye, and a bout at commerce, whenever he comes. He was in our eye. I am glad you liked my new year's speculations. Everybody likes them, except the author of the *Pleasures of Hope*. Disappointment attend him! How I like to be liked, and *what I do* to be liked! They flatter me in magazines, newspapers, and all the minor reviews. The Quarterlies hold aloof. But they must come into it in time, or their leaves be waste paper.

Salute Trinity Library in my name. Two special things are worth seeing at Cambridge,

a portrait of Cromwell at Sidney, and a better of Dr. Harvey (who found out that blood was red) at Dr. Davy's. You should see them.

Coleridge is pretty well, I have not seen him, but hear often of him from Allsop, who sends me hares and pheasants twice a week. I can hardly take so fast as he gives. I have almost forgotten butcher's meat, as plebeian. Are you not glad the cold is gone? I find winters not so agreeable as they used to be, when "winter bleak had charms for me." I cannot conjure up a kind similitude for those snowy flakes— Let them keep to Twelfth cakes.

Mrs. Paris, our Cambridge friend, has been in town. You do not know the Watfords? in Trumpington Street; they are capital people.

Ask anybody you meet, who is the biggest woman in Cambridge — and I'll hold you a wager they'll say Mrs. Smith. She broke down two benches in Trinity Gardens, one on the confines of St. John's, which occasioned a litigation between the societies as to repairing it. In warm weather she retires into an ice-cellar (literally!) and dates the returns of the years from a hot Thursday some twenty years back. She sits in a room with opposite doors and windows, to let in a thorough draught, which gives her slenderer friends toothaches. She is to be seen in the market every morning at ten, cheapening fowls, which I observe the Cambridge poulterers are not sufficiently careful to stump.

Having now answered most of the points contain'd in your letter, let me end with assuring you of our very best kindness, and excuse Mary from not handling the pen on this occasion, especially as it has fallen into so much better hands! Will Dr. W. accept of my respects at the end of a foolish letter.

C. L.

CCXCIX.—TO THOMAS ALLSOP

? 1821.

Dear Sir, — The *hairs* of our head are numbered, but those which emanate from your heart defy arithmetic. I would send longer thanks, but your young man is blowing his fingers in the passage.

Yours gratefully, C. L.

CCC.—TO THOMAS ALLSOP

? 1821.

Dear Sir, — Thanks for the birds and your kindness. It was but yesterday I was contriving with Talfourd to meet you halfway at his chamber. But night don't do so well at present. I shall want to be home at Dalston by eight.

I will pay an afternoon visit to you when you please. I dine at a chop-house at *one* always, but I can spend an hour with you after that.

Yours truly, C. L.

Would Saturday serve?

CCCI.—TO MRS. WILLIAM AYRTON

January 23, 1821.

Dear Mrs. Ayrton, — My sister desires me, as being a more expert penman than herself, to say that she saw Mrs. Paris yesterday, and that she is very much out of spirits, and has expressed a great wish to see your son William and Fanny.

I like to write that word *Fanny*. I do not know but it was one reason of taking upon me this pleasing task.

Moreover that if the said William and Frances will go and sit an hour with her at any time, she will engage that no one else shall see them but herself, and the servant who opens the door, she being confined to her private room. I trust you and the juveniles will comply with this reasonable request, and am, dear Mrs. Ayrton,

Yours and yours truly, C. LAMB

CCCII.—TO MISS HUMPHREYS

January 27, 1821.

Dear Madam, — Carriages to Cambridge are in such request, owing to the installation, that we have found it impossible to procure a conveyance for Emma [Emma Isola] before Wednesday, on which day between the hours of three and four in the afternoon you will see your little friend, with her bloom somewhat impaired by late hours and dissipation, but her gait, gesture,

and general manners (I flatter myself) considerably improved by — *somebody that shall be nameless.*

My sister joins me in love to all true Trumpingtonians, not specifying any, to avoid *envy*; and begs me to assure you that Emma has been a very good girl, which, with certain limitations, I must myself subscribe to. I wish I could cure her of making dog's ears in books, and pinching them on poor Pompey, who, for one, I dare say, will heartily rejoyce at her departure.

Dear Madam, Yours truly,
foolish C. L.

CCCIII. — TO MRS. WILLIAM AYRTON

March 15, 1821.

Dear Madam, — We are out of town of necessity till Wednesday next, when we hope to see one of you at least to a rubber. On some future Saturday we shall most gladly accept your kind offer. When I read your delicate little note, I am ashamed of my great staring letters.

Yours most truly, CHARLES LAMB

CCCIV. — TO THOMAS ALLSOP

March 30, 1821.

My dear Sir, — If you can come next Sunday we shall be equally glad to see you, but do not trust to any of Martin's appointments, except on

business, in future. He is notoriously faithless in that point, and we did wrong not to have warned you. Leg of Lamb, as before; hot at four. And the heart of Lamb ever,

Yours truly,

C. L.

CCCV.— TO LEIGH HUNT

Indifferent Wednesday, April 18, 1821.

Dear Hunt, — There was a sort of side talk at Mr. Novello's about our spending *Good Friday* at Hampstead, but my sister has got so bad a cold, and we both want rest so much, that you shall excuse our putting off the visit some little time longer. Perhaps, after all, you know nothing of it. Believe me, yours truly,

C. LAMB

CCCVI.— TO S. T. COLERIDGE

May 1, 1821.

Dear C., — I will not fail you on Friday by six, and Mary, perhaps earlier. I very much wish to meet "Master Mathew," and am much obliged to the G.'s for the opportunity. Our kind respects to them always.

ELIA

Extract from a MS. note of S. T. C. in my *Beaumont and Fletcher*, dated April 17th, 1807.

Midnight.

"God bless you, dear Charles Lamb, I am dying; I feel I have not many weeks left."

CCCVII. — TO JAMES GILLMAN

May 2, 1821.

Dear Sir, — You dine so late on Friday, it will be impossible for us to go home by the eight o'clock stage. Will you oblige us by securing us beds at some house from which a stage goes to the bank in the morning? I would write to Coleridge, but cannot think of troubling a dying man with such a request.

Yours truly, C. LAMB

If the beds in the town are all engaged, in consequence of Mr. Mathew's appearance, a hackney-coach will serve.

We shall neither of us come much before the time.

NOTE

[We have the following interesting account of this evening, by Mrs. Mathews, who was half-sister of Fanny Kelly: "Mr. Lamb's first approach was not prepossessing. His figure was small and mean; and no man certainly was ever less beholden to his tailor. His 'bran' new *suit* of black cloth (in which he affected several times during the day to take great pride, and to cherish as a novelty that he had long looked for and wanted) was drolly contrasted with his very rusty silk stockings, shown from his knees, and his much too large *thick* shoes, without polish. His shirt rejoiced in a wide ill-plaited frill, and his very small, tight, white neckcloth was hemmed to a fine point at the ends that formed part of the little bow. His hair was black and sleek, but not formal, and his face the gravest I ever saw, but indicating great intellect, and resembling very much the portraits of King Charles I. Mr. Coleridge was very anxious about his *pet* Lamb's first impression upon my husband, which I believe

his friend saw; and guessing that he had been extolled, he mischievously resolved to thwart his panegyrist, disappoint the strangers, and altogether to upset the suspected plan of showing him off.”]

CCCVIII. — TO JOHN PAYNE COLLIER

May 16, 1821.

Dear J. P. C., — Many thanks for the *Decameron*: I have not such a gentleman's book in my collection; it was a great treat to me, and I got it just as I was wanting something of the sort. I take less pleasure in books than heretofore, but I like books about books. In the second volume, in particular, are treasures — your discoveries about *Twelfth Night*, &c. What a Shakespearian essence that speech of Osrades for food! Shakespeare is coarse to it — beginning, “Forbear and eat no more.” Osrades warms up to that, but does not set out ruffian-swaggerer. The character of the ass with those three lines, worthy to be set in gilt vellum, and worn in frontlets by the noble beasts for ever —

Thou would, perhaps, he should become thy foe,
And to that end dost beat him many times:
He cares not for himself, much less thy blow.

Cervantes, Sterne, and Coleridge, have said positively nothing for asses compared with this.

I write in haste; but p. 24, vol. i., the line you cannot appropriate is Gray's sonnet, specimenified by Wordsworth in first preface to L. B., as mixed of bad and good style: p. 143, 2nd

vol., you will find last poem but one of the collection on Sidney's death in Spenser, the line,—

Scipio, Cæsar, Petrarch of our time.

This fixes it to be Raleigh's: I had guess'd it to be Daniel's. The last after it, "Silence augmenteth rage," I will be crucified if it be not Lord Brooke's. Hang you, and all meddling researchers, hereafter, that by raking into learned dust may find me out wrong in my conjecture!

Dear J. P. C., I shall take the first opportunity of personally thanking you for my entertainment. We are at Dalston for the most part, but I fully hope for an evening soon with you in Russell or Bouverie Street, to talk over old times and books.

Remember *us* kindly to Mrs. J. P. C.

Yours very kindly, CHARLES LAMB

I write in misery.

N. B. — The best pen I could borrow at our butcher's: the ink, I verily believe, came out of the kennel.

CCCIX.— TO B. W. PROCTER

Summer, 1821.

Dear Sir, — The *Wits* (as Clare calls us) assemble at my cell (20 Russell St. Covent Garden) this evening at quarter before seven. Cold meat at nine. Puns at — a little after. Mr. Cary wants

to see you, to scold you. I hope you will not fail.

Yours &c. &c. &c. C. LAMB

I am sorry the *London Magazine* is going to be given up.

CCCX.—TO JOHN TAYLOR

June 8, 1821.

Dear Sir, — I am extremely sorry to be obliged to decline the article proposed, as I should have been flattered with a plate accompanying it. In the first place, Midsummer day is not a topic I could make anything of: I am so pure a cockney, and little read, besides, in May games and antiquities; and, in the second, I am here at Margate, spoiling my holydays with a review I have undertaken for a friend, which I shall barely get through before my return; for that sort of work is a hard task to me. If you will excuse the shortness of my first contribution — and I *know* I can promise nothing more for July — I will endeavour a longer article for *our next*.

Will you permit me to say that I think Leigh Hunt would do the article you propose in a masterly manner, if he has not outwrit himself already upon the subject. I do not return the proof — to save postage — because it is correct, with *one exception*. In the stanza from Wordsworth, you have changed *day* into *air* for rhyme-

sake: *day* is the right reading, and I *implore* you to restore it.

The other passage, which you have queried, is to my ear correct. Pray let it stand.

Dear Sir, yours truly, C. LAMB

On second consideration, I do enclose the proof.

CCCXI.—TO WILLIAM AYRTON

July 17, 1821.

Dear Ayrton,—In consequence of the August Coronation we propose postponing (I wonder if these words ever met so close before — mark the elegancy) our Wensday this week to Friday, when a grand rural *fête champêtre* will be given at Russell House. The back garden to be illuminated in honour of the late ceremony, ——

Vivat Regina: moriatur. C. L.

CCCXII.—TO JOHN TAYLOR

July 21, 1821.

Dear Sir, — The *London Magazine* is chiefly pleasant to me, because some of my friends write in it. I hope Hazlitt intends to go on with it, we cannot spare *Table Talk*. For myself I feel almost exhausted, but I will try my hand a little longer, and shall not at all events be written out of it by newspaper paragraphs. Your proofs do not seem

to want my helping hand, they are quite correct always. For God's sake change *Sisera* to *Jael*. This last paper will be a choke-pear I fear to some people, but as you do not object to it, I can be under little apprehension of your exerting your censorship too rigidly.

Thanking you for your extract from Mr. E.'s letter, I remain, dear sir, your obliged,

C. LAMB

CCCXIII. — TO JOHN TAYLOR

July 30, 1821.

Dear Sir, — You will do me injustice if you do not convey to the writer of the beautiful lines, which I now return you, my sense of the extreme kindness which dictated them. Poor Elia (call him *Ellia*) does not pretend to so very clear revelations of a future state of being as Olen seems gifted with. He stumbles about dark mountains at best ; but he knows at least how to be thankful for this life, and is too thankful indeed for certain relationships lent him here, not to tremble for a possible resumption of the gift. He is too apt to express himself lightly, and cannot be sorry for the present occasion, as it has called forth a reproof so Christian-like. His *animus* at least (whatever become of it in the female termination) hath always been *cum Christianis*.

Pray make my gratefulest respects to the poet (do I flatter myself when I hope it may be

M——y?) and say how happy I should feel myself in an acquaintance with him. I will just mention that in the middle of the second column, where I have affixed a cross, the line, —

One in a skeleton's ribb'd hollow coop'd, —
is undoubtedly wrong. Should it not be, —

A skeleton's rib or ribs?

or, —

In a skeleton ribb'd, hollow-coop'd?

I perfectly remember the plate in Quarles. In the first page exoteric is pronounced exóteric. It should be (if that is the word) exotéric. The false accent may be corrected by omitting the word *old*. Pray, for certain reasons, give me to the 18th *at furthest extremity* for my next.

Poor *Elia*, the real (for I am but a counterfeit), is dead. The fact is, a person of that name, an Italian, was a fellow-clerk of mine at the South Sea House, thirty (not forty) years ago, when the characters I described there existed, but had left it like myself many years; and I having a brother now there, and doubting how he might relish certain descriptions in it, I clapt down the name of *Elia* to it, which passed off pretty well, for *Elia* himself added the function of an author to that of a scrivener, like myself.

I went the other day (not having seen him for a year) to laugh over with him at my usurpation of his name, and found him, alas! no more than

a name, for he died of consumption eleven months ago, and I knew not of it.

So the name has fairly devolved to me, I think ; and 't is all he has left me.

Dear sir, yours truly, C. LAMB

CCCXIV. — TO C. A. ELTON

August 12, 1821.

My dear Sir, — You have overwhelmed me with your favours. I have received positively a little library from Baldwyn's. I do not know how I have deserved such a bounty.

We have been up to the ear in classics ever since it came. I have been greatly pleased, but most, I think, with the Hesiod, — the Titan battle quite amazed me. Gad, it was no child's play — and then the homely aphorisms at the end of the works — how adroitly you have turned them ! Can he be the same Hesiod who did the Titans ? the latter is, —

— wine

Which to madness does incline.

But to read the *Days and Works* is like eating nice brown bread, — homely, sweet, and nutritive. Apollonius was new to me : I had confounded him with the conjuror of that name. Medea is glorious ; but I cannot give up Dido. She positively is the only fine lady of antiquity : her courtesy to the Trojans is altogether queen-like. Eneas is a most disagreeable person ; Ascanius,

a pretty young master ; Mezentius for my money — his dying speech shames Turpin — not the archbishop, but the roadster of that name, I mean. I have been ashamed to find how many names of classics (and more than their names) you have introduced me to, that before I was ignorant of.

Your commendation of Master Chapman arideth me. Can any one read the pert, modern, Frenchified notes, &c., in Pope's translation, and contrast them with solemn weighty prefaces of Chapman, writing in full faith, as he evidently does, of the plenary inspiration of his author, worshipping his meanest scraps and relics as divine, — without one sceptical misgiving of their authenticity, and doubt which was the properest to expound Homer to his countrymen? Reverend Chapman! you have read his hymn to Pan (the Homeric) — why, it is Milton's blank verse clothed with rhyme! *Paradise Lost* could scarce lose, could it be so accoutred. I shall die in the belief that he has improved upon Homer, in the *Odyssey* in particular, — the disclosure of Ulysses of himself to Alcinoüs; his previous behaviour at the song of the stern strife arising between Achilles and himself (how it raised him above the *Iliad* Ulysses!) — but you know all these things quite as well as I do. But what a deaf ear old C. would have turned to the doubters in Homer's real personality! He apparently believed all the fables of Homer's birth, &c., &c.

Those notes of Bryant have caused the greatest disorder in my brain-pan. Well, I will not flatter when I say that we have had two or three long evenings' *good reading* out of your kind present.

I will say nothing of the tenderest parts in your own little volume, at the end of such slatternly scribble as this, but indeed they cost us some tears. I scrawl on because of interruptions every moment. You guess how it is in a busy office, — papers thrust into your hand when your hand is busiest, and every anti-classical disavocation.

CCCXV. — TO CHARLES C. CLARKE

Summer, 1821.

My dear Sir, — Your letter has lain in a drawer of my desk, upbraiding me every time I open the said drawer, but it is almost impossible to answer such a letter in such a place, and I am out of the habit of replying to epistles elsewhere than at office. You express yourself concerning H. like a true friend, and have made me feel that I have somehow neglected him, but without knowing very well how to rectify it. I live so remote from him — by Hackney — that he is almost out of the pale of visitation at Hampstead. And I come but seldom to Covent Garden this summer time; and when I do, am sure to pay for the late hours and pleasant Novello suppers which I incur. I also am an invalid. But I will hit

upon some way, that you shall not have cause for your reproof in future. But do not think I take the hint unkindly. When I shall be brought low by any sickness or untoward circumstance, write just such a letter to some tardy friend of mine; or come up yourself with your friendly Henshaw face, and that will be better. I shall not forget in haste our casual day at Margate. May we have many such there or elsewhere!

God bless you for your kindness to H., which I will remember. But do not show N. this, for the flouting infidel doth mock when Christians cry God bless us. Yours and *his, too*, and all our little circle's most affectionate C. LAMB

Mary's love included.

CCCXVI.—TO ALLEN CUNNINGHAM

1821.

Dear Sir, — Our friends of the *London Magazine* meet at 20 Russell St., Covent Garden, this evening at a quarter before seven. I shall be disappointed if you are not among them.

Yours, with perfect sympathy, C. LAMB

CCCXVII.—TO WILLIAM AYRTON

August 14, 1821.

A rubber to-morrow evening at eight. Closed windows on account of the demise of her Majesty.
C. LAMB

CCCXVIII. — TO THOMAS ALLSOP

October 19, 1821.

My dear Sir, — I have to thank you for a fine hare, and, unless I am mistaken, for *two*. The first I received a week since? the account given with it was that it came from Mr. Alfourd. I have no friend of that name, but two who come near to it, — *Mr. Talfourd*. So my gratitude must be divided between you, till I know the true sender.

We are, and shall be, some time, I fear, at Dalston, a distance which does not improve hares by the circuitous route of Covent Garden, though for the sweetness of *this last* I will answer. We dress it to-day. I suppose you know my sister has been and is ill. I do not see much hopes, though there is a glimmer of her speedy recovery. When we are all well, I hope to come among our town friends, and shall have great pleasure in welcoming you from Beresford Hall. Yours and old Mr. Walton's, and Honest Mr. Cotton's,

Piscatorum Amicus, C. L.

CCCXIX. — TO MR. HESSEY OR MR.
TAYLOR

October 26, 1821.

Dear Sir, — I send these slips, because I find them done, and want to get rid of them. I am most uneasily situated at home, and if what I ex-

pect takes place, it may be long before I shall have any communications of the sort to send. I beg you will accept this brief token of good will, and leave me to myself and time to recover into a state for writing.

I am with best wishes for the *London Magazine*,
C. LAMB

CCCXX.—TO WILLIAM AYRTON

October 27, 1821.

I come, Grimalkin! Dalston, near Hackney, 27th Oct'. One thousand 8 hundred and twenty one years and a wee-bit since you and I were redeemed. I doubt if *you* are done properly yet.

CCCXXI.—TO WILLIAM AYRTON

October 30, 1821.

My dear Ayrton, — I take your kindness very thankfully. — A bit of kindness at such times is precious. I am indeed in an uneasy state. But I think it well that the death of poor John should have happened at a time that my sister can be but half sensible to it. She is with me at Dalston, and I ventured on my own advice to acquaint her, as she was, with the worst, for what a communication should I have had to make upon her recovery! It does not seem much to have altered the state of her mind, and now she will gradually come to herself with nothing new to tell. Her

illness has been very obstinate, but I am in no hurry for her to recover, that the idea may be in her mind as long as it can, before she is able to comprehend its weight. I am in a state of trial, but I do not lose myself. The funeral over, I must return to business. I understand your friendship in inviting me to join you, but it would do me no good just now. I hope to meet you again with comparative cheerfulness in some few weeks.

Believe me, very sincerely yours,

CHAS. LAMB

Kind love to Mrs. A. and God bless you all.

CCCXXII.—TO WILLIAM HONE

November 9, 1821.

Dear Sir, —I was not very well nor in spirits when your pleasant note reached me, or should have noticed it sooner. Our Hebrew brethren seem to appreciate the good things of this life in more liberal latitude than we, to judge from their frequent graces. One, I think, you must have omitted: "After concluding a bargain." Their distinction of "Fruits growing upon trees," and "upon the ground," I can understand. A sow makes quite a different grunt (*her grace*) over chesnuts and pignuts. The last is a little above Elia.

With thanks, and wishing grace be with you.

Yours,

C. LAMB

CCCXXIII.—TO JOHN RICKMAN

November 20, 1821.

Dear Rickman, — The poor admiral's death would have been a greater shock to me, but that I have been used to death lately. Poor Jim White's departure last year first broke the spell. I had been so fortunate as to have lost no friend in that way for many long years, and began to think people did not die. But they have since gone off thickly. My brother's death happened when my sister was incapable of feeling it, but the knowledge of it was communicated to her at the time, and she had not to receive it as a shock when she came back to reason. I have reason to think this circumstance a great alleviation. She is now perfectly recovered after a very long illness, and pretty well resigned. We are come to town this day and shall be glad to receive a visit from you or to pay you one.

M. C. B. I have neither seen nor heard from for these two months. I hope your hopes will be justified in him. I am, dear R., yours faithfully,

C. LAMB

CCCXXIV. — UNDATED NOTES TO
THOMAS ALLSOP, — 1821

Ecce iterum:

Dear Sir, — I fear I was obscure. I was plaguily busy when those tempting birds came. I meant

to say I could not come this evening; but any other, if I can know a day before, I can come for two or three afternoon hours, from a quarter to four to half-past six. At present I cannot command more furlough. I have nam'd Saturday. I will come, if you don't countermand. I shall have dined. I have been wanting not *not* to see you.

C. L.

CCCXXV

Dear Sir, — I hear that you have called in Russell Street. I cannot say when I shall be in town. When I am, I must see you; I had hoped to have seen you at Dalston, but my sister is taken ill, — I am afraid will not be able to see any of her friends for a long time.

Believe me, yours truly, C. LAMB

CCCXXVI

Dear Allsop, — We are going to Dalston on Wednesday. Will you come see the last of us to-morrow night — you and Mrs. Allsop?

Yours truly, C. LAMB

CCCXXVII

Dear Allsop, — Your pheasant is glittering, but your company will be more acceptable this evening. Wordsworth is not with us, but the next things to him are.

C. LAMB

CCCXXVIII

D. A., — I expect Procter and Wainwright (Janus W.) this evening : will you come ? I suppose it is but a compliment to ask Mrs. Allsop ? but it is none to say that we should be glad to see her. Yours ever, C. L.

How vexed I am at your Dalston expedition.

CCCXXIX. — TO S. T. COLERIDGE

March 9, 1822.

Dear C., — It gives me great satisfaction to hear that the pig turned out so well ; they are interesting creatures at a certain age ; what a pity such buds should blow out into the maturity of rank bacon ! You had all some of the crackling — and brain sauce ; did you remember to rub it with butter, and gently dredge it a little, just before the crisis ? Did the eyes come away kindly with no Œdipean avulsion ? Was the crackling the colour of the ripe pomegranate ? Had you no complement of boiled neck of mutton before it, to blunt the edge of delicate desire ? Did you flesh maiden teeth in it ? Not that I sent the pig, or can form the remotest guess what part Owen could play in the business. I never knew him give anything away in my life. He would not begin with strangers. I suspect the pig, after all, was meant for me ; but at the unlucky juncture

of time being absent, the present somehow went round to Highgate. To confess an honest truth, a pig is one of those things I could never think of sending away. Teals, wigeons, snipes, barndoor fowl, ducks, geese — your tame villatic things — Welsh mutton, collars of brawn, sturgeon, fresh or pickled, your potted char, Swiss cheeses, French pies, early grapes, muscadines, I impart as freely unto my friends as to myself. They are but self-extended; but pardon me if I stop somewhere — where the fine feeling of benevolence giveth a higher smack than the sensual rarity — there my friends (or any good man) may command me; but pigs are pigs, and I myself therein am nearest to myself. Nay, I should think it an affront, an undervaluing done to Nature who bestowed such a boon upon me, if in a churlish mood I parted with the precious gift.

One of the bitterest pangs of remorse I ever felt was when a child — when my kind old aunt had strained her pocket-strings to bestow a six-penny whole plum-cake upon me. In my way home through the Borough, I met a venerable old man, not a mendicant, but thereabouts — a look-beggar, not a verbal petitioner; and in the coxcombrity of taught-charity I gave away the cake to him. I walked on a little in all the pride of an Evangelical peacock, when of a sudden my old aunt's kindness crossed me — the sum it was to her — the pleasure she had a right to expect that I — not the old imposter — should

take in eating her cake — the cursed ingratitude by which, under the colour of a Christian virtue, I had frustrated her cherished purpose. I sobbed, wept, and took it to heart so grievously, that I think I never suffered the like — and I was right. It was a piece of unfeeling hypocrisy, and proved a lesson to me ever after. The cake has long been masticated, consigned to dunghill with the ashes of that unseasonable pauper.

But when Providence, who is better to us all than our aunts, gives me a pig, remembering my temptation and my fall, I shall endeavour to act towards it more in the spirit of the donor's purpose.

Yours (short of pig) to command in everything,
C. L.

NOTE

[This letter probably led to the immediate composition of the *Elia* essay, *A Dissertation on Roast Pig*, which was printed in the *London Magazine* for September, 1822. — E. V. LUCAS.]

CCCXXX. — TO W. WORDSWORTH

March 20, 1822.

My dear Wordsworth, — A letter from you is very grateful, I have not seen a Kendal post-mark so long! We are pretty well save colds and rheumatics, and a certain deadness to everything, which I think I may date from poor John's loss,

and another accident or two at the same time, that has made me almost bury myself at Dalston, where yet I see more faces than I could wish. Deaths upset one and put one out long after the recent grief. Two or three have died within this last two twelvemonths, and so many parts of me have been numbed. One sees a picture, reads an anecdote, starts a casual fancy, and thinks to tell of it to this person in preference to every other — the person is gone whom it would have peculiarly suited. It won't do for *another*. Every departure destroys a class of sympathies. There's Capt. Burney gone! — what fun has whist now? what matters it what you lead, if you can no longer fancy him looking over you? One never hears anything, but the image of the particular person occurs with whom alone almost you would care to share the intelligence. Thus one distributes oneself about — and now for so many parts of me I have lost the market. Common natures do not suffice me. Good people, as they are called, won't serve. I want individuals. I am made up of queer points and I want so many answering needles. The going away of friends does not make the remainder more precious. It takes so much from them as there was a common link. A. B. and C. make a party. A. dies. B. not only loses A. but all A.'s part in C. C. loses A.'s part in B., and so the alphabet sickens by subtraction of interchangeable.

I express myself muddily, *capite dolente*. I have

a dulling cold. My theory is to enjoy life, but the practice is against it. I grow ominously tired of official confinement. Thirty years have I served the Philistines, and my neck is not subdued to the yoke. You don't know how wearisome it is to breathe the air of four pent walls without relief day after day, all the golden hours of the day between ten and four without ease or interposition. *Taedet me harum quotidianarum formarum*, these pestilential clerk-faces always in one's dish. O for a few years between the grave and the desk! they are the same, save that at the latter you are outside the machine. The foul enchanter — letters four do form his name — Busirane is his name in hell — that has curtailed you of some domestic comforts, hath laid a heavier hand on me, not in present infliction, but in taking away the hope of enfranchisement. I dare not whisper to myself a pension on this side of absolute incapacitation and infirmity, till years have sucked me dry. *Otium cum indignitate*. I had thought in a green old age (O green thought!) to have retired to Ponder's End — emblematic name how beautiful! in the Ware Road, there to have made up my accounts with heaven and the company, toddling about between it and Cheshunt, anon stretching on some fine Izaak Walton morning to Hoddesdon or Amwell, careless as a beggar, but walking, walking ever, till I fairly walk'd myself off my legs, dying walking!

The hope is gone. I sit like Philomel all day (but not singing) with my breast against this thorn of a desk, with the only hope that some pulmonary affliction may relieve me. Vide Lord Palmerston's report of the clerks in the war office (Debates, this morning's *Times*) by which it appears in twenty years, as many clerks have been cough'd and catarrh'd out of it into their freer graves.

Thank you for asking about the pictures. Milton hangs over my fireside in Covent Garden (when I am there), the rest have been sold for an old song, wanting the eloquent tongue that should have set them off!

You have gratify'd me with liking my meeting with Dodd. For the Malvolio story — the thing is become in verity a sad task and I eke it out with anything. If I could slip out of it I should be happy, but our chief reputed assistants have forsaken us. The opium eater crossed us once with a dazzling path, and hath as suddenly left us darkling; and in short I shall go on from dull to worse, because I cannot resist the bookseller's importunity — the old plea you know of authors, but I believe on my part sincere.

Hartley I do not so often see, but I never see him in unwelcome hour. I thoroughly love and honour him.

I send you a frozen epistle, but it is winter and dead time of the year with me. May heaven keep something like spring and summer up with

you, strengthen your eyes and make mine a little lighter to encounter with them, as I hope they shall yet and again, before all are closed.

Yours, with every kind remembrance, C. L.

I had almost forgot to say, I think you thoroughly right about presentation copies. I should like to see you print a book I should grudge to purchase for its size. D——n me, but I would have it though !

CCCXXXI.— TO MRS. NORRIS

March 26, 1822.

Dear Mrs. N., — Mary will be in town this evening or to-morrow morning, as she wants to see you about another business. She will in the meantime enquire respecting the young woman.

Yours sincerely, C. LAMB

CCCXXXII.— TO WILLIAM GODWIN

April 13, 1822.

Dear Godwin, — I cannot imagine how you, who never in your writings have expressed yourself disrespectfully of any one but your Maker, can have given offence to Rickman.

I have written to the numberer of the people to ask when it will be convenient to him to be at home to Mr. Booth. I think it probable he may be out of town in the Parliamentary recess,

but doubt not of a speedy answer. Pray return my recognition to Mr. Booth, from whose excellent Tables of Interest I daily receive inexpressible official facilities.

Yours ever, C. LAMB

CCCXXXIII. — TO W. H. AINSWORTH

May 7, 1822.

Dear Sir, — I have read your poetry with pleasure. The tales are pretty and prettily told, the language often finely poetical. It is only sometimes a little careless, I mean as to redundancy. I have marked certain passages (in pencil only, which will easily obliterate) for your consideration. Excuse this liberty. For the distinction you offer me of a dedication, I feel the honour of it, but I do not think it would advantage the publication. I am hardly on an eminence enough to warrant it. The reviewers, who are no friends of mine — the two big ones especially who make a point of taking no notice of anything I bring out — may take occasion by it to decry us both. But I leave you to your own judgment. Perhaps, if you wish to give me a kind word, it will be more appropriate *before your republication of Tourneur*.

The *Specimens* would give a handle to it, which the poems might seem to want. But I submit it to yourself with the old recollection that “beggars should not be chusers,” and remain with

great respect and wishing success to both your publications,

Your obedient Servant, C. LAMB

No hurry at all for *Tourneur*.

CCCXXXIV.— TO WILLIAM GODWIN

May 16, 1822.

Dear Godwin, — I sincerely feel for all your trouble. Pray use the enclosed £50, and pay me when you can. I shall make it my business to see you very shortly. Yours truly, C. LAMB

CCCXXXV.— TO MRS. JOHN LAMB

May 22, 1822.

Dear Mrs. Lamb, — A letter has come to Arnold for Mrs. Phillips, and, as I have not her address, I take this method of sending it to you. That old rogue's name is Sherwood, as you guessed, but as I named the shirts to him, I think he must have them. Your character of him made me almost repent of the bounty.

You must consider this letter as Mary's — for writing letters is such a trouble and puts her to such twitters (family modesty, you know; it is the way with me, but I try to get over it) that in pity I offer to do it for her.

We hold our intention of seeing France, but expect to see you here first, as we do not go till

the 20th of next month. A steamboat goes to Dieppe, I see.

Christie has not sent to me, and I suppose is in no hurry to settle the account. I think in a day or two (if I do not hear from you to the contrary) I shall refresh his memory.

I am sorry I made you pay for two letters. I peated it, and re-peated it.

Miss Wright is married, and I am a hamper in her debt, which I hope will now not be remembered. She is in great good humour, I hear, and yet out of spirits.

Where shall I get such full-flavour'd Geneva again?

Old Mr. Henshaw^r died last night, precisely at half-past eleven. He has been open'd by desire of Mrs. McKenna; and, where his heart should have been, was found a stone. Poor Arnold is inconsolable; and, not having shaved since, looks deplorable.

With our kind remembrances to Caroline and your friends, we remain yours affectionately,

C. L. AND M. LAMB

I thank you for your kind letter, and owe you one in return, but Charles is in such a hurry to send this to be franked.

Your affectionate sister, M. LAMB

^r On the right-hand margin is written, —

“He is not dead.”

CCCXXXVI. — TO MARY LAMB

August, 1822.

Then you must walk all along the borough side of the Seine facing the Tuileries. There is a mile and a half of print shops and book stalls. If the latter were but English. Then there is a place where the Paris people put all their dead people and bring 'em flowers and dolls and gingerbread nuts and sonnets and such trifles. And that is all I think worth seeing as sights, except that the streets and shops of Paris are themselves the best sight.

CCCXXXVII. — TO JOHN CLARE

August 31, 1822.

Dear Clare, — I thank you heartily for your present. I am an invertebrate old Londoner, but while I am among your choice collections, I seem to be native to them, and free of the country. The quantity of your observation has astonished me. What have most pleased me have been *Recollections after a Ramble*, and those *Grongar Hill* kind of pieces in eight syllable lines, my favourite measure, such as *Cowper Hill* and *Solitude*. In some of your story-telling ballads the provincial phrases sometimes startle me. I think you are too profuse with them. In poetry *slang* of every kind is to be avoided. There is a rustick Cockneyism, as little pleasing as ours of London. Trans-

plant Arcadia to Helpstone. The true rustic style, the Arcadian English, I think is to be found in Shenstone. Would his *Schoolmistress*, the prettiest of poems, have been better, if he had used quite the Goody's own language? Now and then a home rusticism is fresh and startling, but where nothing is gained in expression, it is out of tenor. It may make folks smile and stare, but the ungenial coalition of barbarous with refined phrases will prevent you in the end from being so generally tasted, as you deserve to be. Excuse my freedom, and take the same liberty with my *puns*.

I send you two little volumes of my spare hours. They are of all sorts, there is a methodist hymn for Sundays, and a farce for Saturday night. Pray give them a place on your shelf. Pray accept a little volume, of which I have duplicate, that I may return in equal number to your welcome presents.

I think I am indebted to you for a sonnet in the *London* for August.

Since I saw you I have been in France and have eaten frogs. The nicest little rabbit things you ever tasted. Do look about for them. Make Mrs. Clare pick off the hind quarters, boil them plain, with parsley and butter. The fore quarters are not so good. She may let them hop off by themselves.

Yours sincerely, CHAS. LAMB

NOTE

[The following is the sonnet referred to by Lamb :

TO ELIA

Elia, thy reveries and vision'd themes
To Care's lorn heart a luscious pleasure prove ;
Wild as the mystery of delightful dreams,
Soft as the anguish of remember'd love :
Like records of past days their memory dances
Mid the cool feelings Manhood's reason brings,
As the unearthly visions of romances
Peopled with sweet and uncreated things ; —
And yet thy themes thy gentle worth enhances !
Then wake again thy wild harp's tenderest strings,
Sing on, sweet Bard, let fairy loves again
Smile in thy dreams, with angel ecstasies ;
Bright o'er our souls will break the heavenly strain
Through the dull gloom of earth's realities.]

CCCXXXVIII. — TO WILLIAM AYRTON

September 5, 1822.

Dear A., — A dim notion dawns upon my drunken *caput*, that last night you made an engagement for me at your house on Monday ; it may be all a fiction ; but if you did, pray change it for some *Evening* between that day and Saturday — not *Saturday*.

It is impossible for me to come on Monday. If it is all delusion, forgive the harmless vanity. I want that magazine you took away, if *you* took it.

This is a mere hypothetical epistle.

C. LAMB

CCCXXXIX.—TO MRS. KENNEY

September 11, 1822.

Dear Mrs. K.,— Mary got home safe on Friday night. She has suffered only a common fatigue, but as she is weakly, begs me to thank you in both our names for all the trouble she has been to you. She did not succeed in saving Robinson's fine waistcoat. They could not comprehend how a waistcoat, marked Henry Robinson, could be a part of Miss Lamb's wearing apparel. So they seized it for the king, who will probably appear in it at the next levee. Next to yourself, our best thanks to H. Payne. I was disappointed he came not with her. Tell Kenney the cow has got out, by composition, paying so much in the pound.

The canary bird continues her sleep-persuading strains. Pray say to Ellen that I think the verses very pretty which she slipped into my pocket on the last day of my being at Versailles. The stanzas on *Ambition* are fine, allowing for the age of the writer. The thought that the present King of Spain whom I suppose she means by the "brown monarch," sitting in state among his grandees, is like

A sparrow lonely on the house's top,
is perhaps a little forced. The next line is better,

Too high to stoop, though not afraid to drop.

Pray deliver what follows to my dear wife Sophy.

My dear Sophy, — The few short days of con-
nubial felicity which I passed with you among
the pears and apricots of Versailles were some of
the happiest of my life. But they are flown!

And your other half — your dear co-twin —
that she-you — that almost equal sharer of my
affections: you and she are my better half, a quar-
ter a-piece. She and you are my pretty sixpence
— you the head, and she the tail. Sure, Heaven
that made you so alike must pardon the error of
an inconsiderate moment, should I for love of
you, love her too well. Do you think laws were
made for lovers? I think not.

Adieu, amiable pair, Yours and yours,

C. LAMB

P. S. — I enclose half a dear kiss a-piece for
you.

NOTE

[This charming note is to Mrs. Kenney's little girl, Sophy,
whom Lamb calls his dear wife. — E. V. LUCAS.]

CCCXL. — TO BERNARD BARTON

September 11, 1822.

Dear Sir, — You have misapprehended me
sadly, if you suppose that I meant to impute any
inconsistency (in your writing poetry) with your
religious profession. I do not remember what I
said, but it was spoken sportively, I am sure. One
of my levities, which you are not so used to as

my older friends. I probably was thinking of the light in which your so indulging yourself would appear to *Quakers*, and put their objection in my own foolish mouth. I would eat my words (provided they should be written on not very coarse paper) rather than I would throw cold water upon your, and my once, harmless occupation. I have read *Napoleon* and the rest with delight. I like them for what they are, and for what they are not. I have sickened on the modern rhodomontade and Byronism, and your plain Quakerish Beauty has captivated me. It is all wholesome cates, aye, and toothsome too, and withal Quakerish. If I were George Fox, and George Fox Licenser of the press, they should have my absolute *Imprimatur*. I hope I have removed the impression.

I am, like you, a prisoner to the desk. I have been chained to that galley thirty years, a long shot. I have almost grown to the wood. If no imaginative poet, I am sure I am a figurative one. Do "Friends" allow puns? *verbal* equivocations? —they are unjustly accused of it, and I did my little best in the *Imperfect Sympathies* to vindicate them.

I am very tired of clerking it, but have no remedy. Did you see a sonnet to this purpose in the *Examiner*? —

Who first invented Work — and tied the free
And holy-day rejoicing spirit down
To the ever-haunting importunity
Of business, in the green fields, and the town —

To plough — loom — anvil — spade — and, oh, most sad,
To this dry drudgery of the desk's dead wood?
Who but the Being Unblest, alien from good,
Sabbathless Satan! he who his unglad
Task ever plies 'mid rotatory burnings,
That round and round incalculably reel —
For wrath Divine hath made him like a wheel —
In that red realm from whence are no returnings;
Where toiling and turmoiling ever and aye
He, and his Thoughts, keep pensive worky-day.

C. L.

I fancy the sentiment exprest above will be nearly your own, the expression of it probably would not so well suit with a follower of John Woolman. But I do not know whether diabolism is a part of your creed, or where indeed to find an exposition of your creed at all. In feelings and matters not dogmatical, I hope I am half a Quaker. Believe me, with great respect, yours,

C. LAMB

I shall always be happy to see, or hear from you.

CCCXLI. — TO BARRON FIELD

September 22, 1822.

My dear F., — I scribble hastily at office. Frank wants my letter presently. I and sister are just returned from Paris!! We have eaten frogs. It has been such a treat! You know our monotonous general tenor. Frogs are the nicest little delicate things — rabbity-flavoured. Imagine a

Lilliputian' rabbit! They fricassee them; but in my mind, drest seethed, plain, with parsley and butter, would have been the decision of Apicius.

Shelley the great Atheist has gone down by water to eternal fire! Hunt and his young fry are left stranded at Pisa, to be adopted by the remaining duumvir, Lord Byron — his wife and six children and their maid. What a cargo of Jonases, if they had foundered too! The only use I can find of friends, is that they do to borrow money of you. Henceforth I will consort with none but rich rogues. Paris is a glorious picturesque old city. London looks mean and new to it, as the town of Washington would, seen after *it*. But they have no St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey. The Seine, so much despised by Cockneys, is exactly the size to run thro' a magnificent street; palaces a mile long on one side, lofty Edinbro' stone (O the glorious antiques!): houses on the other. The Thames disunites London and Southwark. I had Talma to supper with me. He has picked up, as I believe, an authentic portrait of Shakspeare. He paid a broker about £40 English for it. It is painted on the one half of a pair of bellows—a lovely picture, corresponding with the folio head. The bellows has old carved *wings* round it, and round the visnomy is inscribed, near as I remember, not divided into rhyme — I found out the rhyme —

Whom have we here,
Stuck on this bellows,

But the Prince of good fellows,
Willy Shakspere?

At top, —

O base and coward luck!
To be here stuck. — POINS.

At bottom, —

Nay! rather a glorious lot is to him assign'd,
Who, like the Almighty, rides upon the *wind*. — PISTOL.

This is all in old carved wooden letters. The countenance smiling, sweet, and intellectual beyond measure, even as he was immeasurable. It may be a forgery. They laugh at me and tell me Ireland is in Paris, and has been putting off a portrait of the Black Prince. How far old wood may be imitated I cannot say. Ireland was not found out by his parchments, but by his poetry. I am confident no painter on either side the Channel could have painted anything near like the face I saw. Again, would such a painter and forger have expected £40 for a thing, if authentic, worth £4000? Talma is not in the secret, for he had not even found out the rhymes in the first inscription. He is coming over with it, and, my life to Southey's *Thalaba*, it will gain universal faith.

The letter is wanted, and I am wanted. Imagine the blank filled up with all kind things.

Our joint hearty remembrances to both of you.
Yours as ever, C. LAMB

NOTE

[Lamb's belief in the authenticity of this portrait was misplaced; see the following account from *Chambers's Journal* for September 27, 1856 :

About the latter part of the last century, one Zincke, an artist of little note, but grandson of the celebrated enameller of that name, manufactured fictitious Shakespeares by the score. . . . The most famous of Zincke's productions is the well-known Talma Shakespeare, which gentle Charles Lamb made a pilgrimage to Paris to see; and when he did see, knelt down and kissed with idolatrous veneration. Zincke painted it on a larger panel than was necessary for the size of the picture, and then cut away the superfluous wood, so as to leave the remainder in the shape of a pair of bellows. . . . Zincke probably was thinking of "a muse of fire" when he adopted this strange method of raising the wind; but he made little by it, for the dealer into whose hands the picture passed, sold it as a curiosity, not an original portrait, for £5. The buyer, being a person of ingenuity, and fonder of money than curiosities, fabricated a series of letters to and from Sir Kenelm Digby, and, passing over to France, *planted* — the slang term used among the less honest of the curiosity dealing fraternity — the picture and the letters in an old château near Paris. Of course a confederate managed to discover the *plant*, in the presence of witnesses, and great was the excitement that ensued. Sir Kenelm Digby had been in France in the reign of Charles I, and the fictitious correspondence *proved* that the picture was an original, and had been painted by Queen Elizabeth's command, on the lid of her favourite pair of bellows !

It really would seem that the more absurd a deception is, the better it succeeds. All Paris was in delight at possessing an original Shakespeare, while the London amateurs were in despair at such a treasure being lost to England. The ingenious person soon found a purchaser, and a high price recompensed him for his trouble. But more remains to be told. The happy purchaser took his treasure to Ribet, the first Parisian picture-cleaner of the day, to be cleaned. Ribet set to work; but we may fancy his surprise as the superficial *impasto* of Zincke washed off beneath the sponge, and Shakespeare became a female in a lofty headgear adorned with blue ribbons.

In a furious passion the purchaser ran to the seller. "Let us talk over the affair quietly," said the latter; "I have been cheated as well as you: let us keep the matter secret; if we let the public know it, all Paris and even London too, will be laughing at us. I will return you your money, and take back the picture, if you will employ Ribet to restore it to the same condition as it was in when you received it." This fair proposition was acceded to, and Ribet restored the picture; but as he was a superior artist to Zincke, he greatly improved it, and this improvement was attributed to his skill as a cleaner. The secret being kept, and the picture, improved by cleaning, being again in the market, Talma, the great Tragedian, purchased it at even a higher price than that given by the first buyer. Talma valued it highly, enclosed it in a case of morocco and gold, and subsequently refused 1000

Napoleons for it ; and even when at last its whole history was disclosed, he still cherished it as a genuine memorial of the great bard.]

CCCXLII.—TO JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

Autumn, 1822.

Dear Payne, — A friend and fellow-clerk of mine, Mr. White (a good fellow) coming to your parts, I would fain have accompanied him, but am forced instead to send a part of me, verse and prose, most of it from twenty to thirty years old, such as I then was, and I am not much altered.

Paris, which I hardly knew whether I liked when I was in it, is an object of no small magnitude with me now. I want to be going, to the Jardin des Plantes (is that right, Louisa?) with you — to Père de la Chaise, La Morgue, and all the sentimentalities. How is Talma, and his (my) dear Shakspeare?

N. B. — My friend White knows Paris thoroughly, and does not want a guide. We did, and had one. We both join in thanks. Do you remember a Blue-Silk Girl (English) at the Luxembourg, that did not much seem to attend to the Pictures, who fell in love with you, and whom I fell in love with — an inquisitive, prying, curious Beauty — where is she?

Votre Très Humble Serviteur,

CHARLOIS AGNEAU, *alias* C. LAMB

Guichy is well, and much as usual. He seems blind to all the distinctions of life, except

to those of sex. Remembrance to Kenny and Poole.

NOTE

[John Howard Payne (1792—1852) was born in New York. He began life as an actor in 1809 as Young Norval in *Douglas*, and made his English *début* in 1813 in the same part. For several years he lived either in London or Paris, where among his friends were Washington Irving and Talma. He wrote a number of plays, and in one of them, *Clari, or the Maid of Milan*, is the song *Home, Sweet Home*, with Bishop's music, on which his immortality rests. Payne died in Tunis, where he was American Consul, in 1852, and when in 1883 he was reinterred at Washington, it was as the author of *Home, Sweet Home*. He seems to have been a charming but ill-starred man, whom to know was to love. — E. V. LUCAS.]

CCCXLIII. — TO BERNARD BARTON

October 9, 1822.

Dear Sir, — I am ashamed not sooner to have acknowledged your letter and poem. I think the latter very temperate, very serious and very seasonable. I do not think it will convert the club at Pisa, neither do I think it will satisfy the bigots on our side the water. Something like a parody on the song of Ariel would please them better.

Full fathom five the Atheist lies,
Of his bones are hell-dice made.

I want time, or fancy, to fill up the rest. I sincerely sympathise with you on your doleful confinement. Of Time, Health, and Riches, the first in order is not last in excellence. Riches are chiefly good, because they give us Time. What

a weight of wearisome prison hours have I to look back and forward to, as quite cut out of life — and the sting of the thing is, that for six hours every day I have no business which I could not contract into two, if they would let me work task-work. I shall be glad to hear that your grievance is mitigated.

Shelley I saw once. His voice was the most obnoxious squeak I ever was tormented with, ten thousand times worse than the Laureat's, whose voice is the worst part about him, except his Laureatcy. Lord Byron opens upon him on Monday in a parody (I suppose) of the *Vision of Judgment*, in which latter the poet I think did not much show *his*. To award his Heaven and his Hell in the presumptuous manner he has done, was a piece of immodesty as bad as Shelleyism.

I am returning a poor letter. I was formerly a great scribbler in that way, but my hand is out of order. If I said my head too, I should not be very much out, but I will tell no tales of myself. I will therefore end (after my best thanks, with a hope to see you again some time in London), begging you to accept this letteret for a letter — a leveret makes a better present than a grown hare, and short troubles (as the old excuse goes) are best.

I hear that C. Lloyd is well, and has returned to his family. I think this will give you pleasure to hear. I remain, dear sir, yours truly,

C. LAMB

CCCXLIV. — TO B. R. HAYDON

October 9, 1822.

Dear Haydon,— Poor Godwin has been turned out of his house and business in Skinner Street, and if he does not pay two years' arrears of rent, he will have the whole stock, furniture, &c., of his new house (in the Strand) seized when term begins. We are trying to raise a subscription for him. My object in writing this is simply to ask you, if this is a kind of case which would be likely to interest Mrs. Coutts in his behalf; and *who* in your opinion is the best person to speak with her on his behalf. Without the aid of from £300 to £400 by that time, early in November, he must be ruined. You are the only person I can think of, of her acquaintance, and can, perhaps, if not yourself, recommend the person most likely to influence her. Shelley had engaged to clear him of all demands, and he has gone down to the deep insolvent. Yours truly, C. LAMB

Is Sir Walter to be applied to, and by what channel?

CCCXLV. — TO JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

No date.

Dear J. H. P.,— Thank you. I shall certainly attend your Farce, if in town; but as 't is possible I shall ruralize this week, I will have no

orders of you till next week. All Sundays I am ready to ambulate with you, but will make no engagement for this week, — to leave the poor residue of my holidays unembarrassed.

Yours truly, C. L.

CCCXLVI. — TO JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

October 22, 1822.

Ali Pacha will do. I sent my sister the first night, not having been able to go myself, and her report of its effect was most favourable. I saw it last night — the third night — and it was most satisfactorily received. I have been sadly disappointed in Talfourd, who does the critiques in the *Times*, and who promised his strenuous services; but by some damn'd arrangement he was sent to the wrong house, and a most iniquitous account of *Ali* substituted for his, which I am sure would have been a kind one. The *Morning Herald* did it ample justice, without appearing to puff it. It is an abominable misrepresentation of the *Times*, that Farren played *Ali* like Lord Ogilby. He acted infirmity of body, but not of voice or purpose. His manner was even grand. A grand old gentleman. His falling to the earth when his son's death was announced was fine as anything I ever saw. It was as if he had been blasted. Miss Foote looked helpless and beautiful, and greatly helped the piece. It is going on steadily, I am sure, for *many nights*. Marry, I was a little

disappointed with Hassan, who tells us he subsists by cracking court jests before Hali, but he made none. In all the rest, scenery and machinery, it was faultless. I hope it will bring you here. I should be most glad of that. I have a room for you, and you shall order your own dinner three days in the week. I must retain my own authority for the rest.

As far as magazines go, I can answer for Talfourd in the *New Monthly*. He cannot be put out there. But it is established as a favourite, and can do without these expletives. I long to talk over with you the Shakspeare picture. My doubts of its being a forgery mainly rest upon the goodness of the picture. The bellows might be trumped up, but where did the painter spring from? Is Ireland a consummate artist, or any of Ireland's accomplices?—but we shall confer upon it, I hope. The *New Times*, I understand, was favourable to *Ali*, but I have not seen it. I am sensible of the want of method in this letter, but I have been deprived of the connecting organ, by a practice I have fallen into since I left Paris, of taking too much strong spirits of a night. I must return to the Hotel de l'Europe and Maccan.

How is Kenney? Have you seen my friend White? What is Poole about, &c.? Do not write, but come and answer me.

The weather is charming, and there is a mermaid to be seen in London. You may not have

the opportunity of inspecting such a *Poisarde* once again in ten centuries.

My sister joins me in the hope of seeing you.

Yours truly, C. LAMB

CCCXLVII. — TO B. R. HAYDON

October 29, 1822.

Dear H., — I have written a very respectful letter to Sir W. S. Godwin did not write, because he leaves all to his committee, as I will explain to you. If this rascally weather holds, you will see but one of us on that day.

Yours, with many thanks, C. LAMB

CCCXLVIII. — TO SIR WALTER SCOTT

October 29, 1822.

Dear Sir, — I have to acknowledge your kind attention to my application to Mr. Haydon. I have transmitted your draft to Mr. G[odwin]'s committee as an anonymous contribution through me. Mr. Haydon desires his thanks and best respects to you, but was desirous that I should write to you on this occasion. I cannot pass over your kind expressions as to myself. It is not likely that I shall ever find myself in Scotland, but should the event ever happen, I should be proud to pay my respects to you in your own land. My disparagement of heaths and highlands — if I said any such thing in half earnest, — you must put

down as a piece of the old Vulpine policy. I must make the most of the spot I am chained to, and console myself for my flat destiny as well as I am able. I know very well our mole-hills are not mountains, but I must cocker them up and make them look as big and as handsome as I can, that we may both be satisfied.

Allow me to express the pleasure I feel on an occasion given me of writing to you, and to subscribe myself, dear sir, your obliged and respectful servant,

CHARLES LAMB

CCCXLIX.—TO THOMAS ROBINSON

November 11, 1822.

Dear Sir, — We have to thank you, or Mrs. Robinson — for I think her name was on the direction — for the best pig which myself, the warmest of pig-lovers, ever tasted. The dressing and the sauce were pronounced incomparable by two friends, who had the good fortune to drop in to dinner yesterday, but I must not mix up my cook's praises with my acknowledgments; let me but have leave to say that she and we did your pig justice. I should dilate on the crackling — done to a turn — but I am afraid Mrs. Clarkson, who, I hear, is with you, will set me down as an epicure. Let it suffice, that you have spoil'd my appetite for boiled mutton for some time to come. Your brother Henry partook of the cold relics —

by which he might give a good guess at what it had been *bot*.

With our thanks, pray convey our kind respects to Mrs. Robinson, and the lady before mentioned.

Your obliged Servant, CHARLES LAMB

NOTE

[Lamb's *Dissertation on Roast Pig* had been printed in the *London Magazine* in September, 1822, and this pig was one of the first of many such gifts that came to him. — E. V. LUCAS.]

CCCL.—TO JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

November 13, 1822.

Dear P.,—Owing to the inconvenience of having two lodgings, I did not get your letter quite so soon as I should. The India House is my proper address, where I am sure for the fore part of every day. The instant I got it, I addressed a letter, for Kemble to see, to my friend Henry Robertson, the Treasurer of Covent Garden Theatre. He had a conference with Kemble, and the result is, that Robertson, in the name of the management, recognized to me the full ratifying of your bargain: £250 for *Ali*, the *Slaves*, and another piece which they had not received. He assures me the whole will be paid you, or the proportion for the two former, as soon as ever the Treasury will permit it. He offered to write the same to you, if I pleased. He thinks in a month or so they will be able to liquidate it. He is posi-

tive no trick could be meant you, as Mr. Planché's alterations, which were trifling, were not at all considered as affecting your bargain. With respect to the copyright of *Ali*, he was of opinion no money would be given for it, as *Ali* is quite laid aside. This explanation being given, you would not think of printing the two copies together by way of recrimination. He told me the secret of the *Two Galley Slaves* at Drury Lane. Elliston, if he is informed right, engaged Poole to translate it, but before Poole's translation arrived, finding it coming out at Covent Garden, he procured copies of two several translations of it in London. So you see here are four translations, reckoning yours. I fear no copyright would be got for it, for anybody may print it and anybody has. Your's has run seven nights, and R. is of opinion it will not exceed in number of nights the nights of *Ali*,—about thirteen. But your full right to your bargain with the management is in the fullest manner recognized by him officially. He gave me every hope the money will be spared as soon as they can spare it. He said *a month or two*, but seemed to me to mean about *a month*.

A new lady is coming out in Juliet, to whom they look very confidently for replenishing their treasury. Robertson is a very good fellow, and I can rely upon his statement. Should you have any more pieces, and want to get a copyright for them, I am the worst person to negotiate with any bookseller, having been cheated by all I have

had to do with (except Taylor and Hessey, — but they do not publish theatrical pieces), and I know not how to go about it, or who to apply to. But if you had no better negotiator, I should know the minimum you expect, for I should not like to make a bargain out of my own head, being (after the Duke of Wellington) the worst of all negotiators. I find from Robertson you have written to Bishop on the subject. Have you named anything of the copyright of the *Slaves*? R. thinks no publisher would pay for it, and you would not risque it on your own account.

This is a mere business letter, so I will just send my love to my little wife at Versailles, to her dear mother, &c.

Believe me, yours truly, C. L.

NOTE

[Lamb's "little wife" is explained in note to letter to Mrs. Kenney of September 11, 1822. — ED.]

CCCLI. — TO JOHN TAYLOR

December 7, 1822.

Dear Sir, — I should like the enclosed Dedication to be printed, unless you dislike it. I like it. It is in the olden style. But if you object to it, put forth the book as it is. Only pray don't let the printer mistake the word *curt* for *curst*.

C. L.

On better consideration, pray omit that Dedication. The Essays want no Preface: they are *all Preface*. A Preface is nothing but a talk with the reader; and they do nothing else. Pray omit it.

There will be a sort of Preface in the next *Magazine*, which may act as an advertisement, but not proper for the volume.

Let ELIA come forth bare as he was born.

N. B. *No* Preface.

C. L.

CCCLII. — TO WALTER WILSON

December 16, 1822.

Dear Wilson, — *Lightening*, I was going to call you. You must have thought me negligent in not answering your letter sooner. But I have a habit of never writing letters, but at the office; 't is so much time cribbed out of the Company: and I am but just got out of the thick of a tea-sale, in which most of the entry of notes, deposits, &c., usually falls to my share. Dodwell is willing, but alas! slow. To compare a pile of my notes with his little hillock (which has been as long a-building), what is it but to compare Olympus with a mole-hill. Then Wadd is a sad shuffler.

I have nothing of Defoe's but two or three novels, and the *Plague History*. I can give you no information about him. As a slight general character of what I remember of them (for I

have not look'd into them latterly) I would say that in the appearance of *truth* in all the incidents and conversations that occur in them they exceed any works of fiction I am acquainted with. It is perfect illusion. The *author* never appears in these self-narratives (for so they ought to be called or rather autobiographies) but the *narrator* chains us down to an implicit belief in everything he says. There is all the minute detail of a log-book in it. Dates are painfully pressed upon the memory. Facts are repeated over and over in varying phrases, till you cannot chuse but believe them. It is like reading evidence given in a court of justice. So anxious the story-teller seems, that the truth should be clearly comprehended, that when he has told us a matter of fact, or a motive, in a line or two farther down he *repeats* it with his favourite figure of speech, "I say," so and so, — though he had made it abundantly plain before. This is in imitation of the common people's way of speaking, or rather of the way in which they are addressed by a master or mistress, who wishes to impress something upon their memories ; and has a wonderful effect upon matter-of-fact readers. Indeed it is to such principally that he writes. His style is elsewhere beautiful, but plain and *homely*. *Robinson Crusoe* is delightful to all ranks and classes, but it is easy to see that it is written in phraseology peculiarly adapted to the lower conditions of readers : hence it is an especial favourite with sea-faring

men, poor boys, servant-maids, &c. His novels are capital kitchen-reading, while they are worthy from their deep interest to find a shelf in the libraries of the wealthiest, and the most learned. His passion for *matter-of-fact narrative* sometimes betrayed him into a long relation of common incidents which might happen to any man, and have no interest but the intense appearance of truth in them, to recommend them. The whole latter half, or two-thirds, of *Colonel Jack* is of this description. The beginning of *Colonel Jack* is the most affecting natural picture of a young thief that was ever drawn. His losing the stolen money in the hollow of a tree, and finding it again when he was in despair, and then being in equal distress at not knowing how to dispose of it, and several similar touches in the early history of the Colonel, evince a deep knowledge of human nature; and, putting out of question the superior *romantic* interest of the latter, in my mind very much exceed *Crusoe*. *Roxana* (first edition) is the next in interest, though he left out the best part of it in subsequent editions from a foolish hyper-criticism of his friend, Southerne. But *Moll Flanders*, the *Account of the Plague*, &c., &c., are all of one family, and have the same stamp of character.

Believe me with friendly recollections, *Brother*
(as I used to call you), yours, C. LAMB

The review was not mine, nor have I seen it.

CCCLIII. — TO BERNARD BARTON

December 23, 1822.

Dear Sir,—I have been so distracted with business and one thing or other, I have not had a quiet quarter of an hour for epistolatory purposes. Christmas too is come, which always puts a rattle into my morning skull. It is a visiting unquiet un-Quakerish season. I get more and more in love with solitude, and proportionately hampered with company. I hope you have some holydays at this period. I have one day, Christmas-day, alas! too few to commemorate the season. All work and no play dulls me. Company is not play, but many times hard work. To play, is for a man to do what he pleases, or to do nothing — to go about soothing his particular fancies. I have lived to a time of life, to have outlived the good hours, the nine o'clock suppers, with a bright hour or two to clear up in afterwards. Now you cannot get tea before that hour, and then sit gaping, music-bothered perhaps, till half-past twelve brings up the tray, and what you steal of convivial enjoyment after, is heavily paid for in the disquiet of to-morrow's head.

I am pleased with your liking *John Woodvil*, and amused with your knowledge of our drama being confined to Shakspeare and Miss Bailly. What a world of fine territory between Land's End and Johnny Grots [John O'Groat's] have

you missed traversing. I almost envy you to have so much to read. I feel as if I had read all the books I want to read. O to forget Fielding, Steele, &c., and read 'em new.

Can you tell me a likely place where I could pick up, cheap, Fox's *Journal*? There are no Quaker Circulating Libraries? Ellwood, too, I must have. I rather grudge that Southey has taken up the history of your people. I am afraid he will put in some levity. I am afraid I am not quite exempt from that fault in certain magazine articles, where I have introduced mention of them. Were they to do again, I would reform them.

Why should not you write a poetical account of your old worthies, deducing them from Fox to Woolman?—but I remember you did talk of something in that kind, as a counterpart to the *Ecclesiastical Sketches*. But would not a poem be more consecutive than a string of sonnets? You have no martyrs *quite to the Fire*, I think, among you. But plenty of Heroic Confessors, Spirit-Martyrs—Lamb-Lions.—Think of it.

It would be better than a series of Sonnets on Eminent Bankers. I like a hit at our way of life, tho' it does well for me, better than anything short of *all one's time to one's self*, for which alone I rankle with envy at the rich. Books are good, and pictures are good, and money to buy them therefore good, but to buy *time!* in other words, *life*.

The "compliments of the time to you" should end my letter; to a Friend I must say the "sincerity of the season;" I hope they both mean the same. With excuses for this hastily penn'd note, believe me, with great respect, C. LAMB

CCCLIV.—TO JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

January, 1823.

Dear Payne, — Your little books are most acceptable. 'Tis a delicate edition. They are gone to the binder's. When they come home I shall have two — the *Camp* and *Patrick's Day* — to read for the first time. I may say three, for I never read the *School for Scandal*. "Seen it I have, and in its happier days." With the books Harwood left a truncheon or mathematical instrument, of which we have not yet ascertained the use. It is like a telescope, but unglazed. Or a ruler, but not smooth enough. It opens like a fan, and discovers a frame such as they weave lace upon at Lyons and Chambery. Possibly it is from those parts. I do not value the present the less, for not being quite able to detect its purport.

When I can find any one coming your way I have a volume for you, my *Elias* collected. Tell Poole, his Cockney in the *London Magazine* tickled me exceedingly. Harwood is to be with us this evening with Fanny, who comes to introduce a literary lady, who wants to see me, — and whose portentous name is *Plura*, in English

“many things.” Now, of all God’s creatures, I detest letters-affecting, authors-hunting ladies. But Fanny “will have it so.” So Miss Many Things and I are to have a conference, of which you shall have the result. I dare say she does not play at whist.

Treasurer Robertson, whose coffers are absolutely swelling with pantomimic receipts, called on me yesterday to say he is going to write to you, but if I were also, I might as well say that your last bill is at the banker’s, and will be honoured on the instant receipt of the third piece, which you have stipulated for. If you have any such in readiness, strike while the iron is hot, before the clown cools.

Tell Mrs. Kenney, that the Miss F. H. (or H. F.) Kelly, who has begun so splendidly in *Juliet*, is the identical little Fanny Kelly who used to play on their green before their great Lying-Inn Lodgings at Bayswater. Her career has stopt short by the injudicious bringing her out in a vile new tragedy, and for a third character in a stupid old one,—the *Earl of Essex*. This is Macready’s doing, who taught her. Her recitation, &c. (*not her voice or person*), is masculine. It is so clever, it seemed a male *début*. But cleverness is the bane of female tragedy especially. Passions uttered logically, &c. It is bad enough in men-actors. Could you do nothing for little Clara Fisher? Are there no French pieces with a child in them? By pieces I mean here dramas, to prevent male-

constructions. Did not the Blue Girl remind you of some of Congreve's women? Angelica or Millamant? To me she was a vision of genteel comedy realized. Those kind of people never come to see one. *N'importe* — havn't I Miss Many Things coming? Will you ask Horace Smith to [*the remainder of letter lost.*]

CCCLV.—TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

January, 1823.

Dear Wordsworth, — I beg your acceptance of ELIA, detached from any of its old companions which might have been less agreeable to you. I hope your eyes are better, but if you must spare them, there is nothing in my pages which a lady may not read aloud without indecorum, *which is more than can be said of Shakspeare.*

What a nut this last sentence would be for Blackwood!

You will find I availed myself of your suggestion, in curtailing the dissertation on Malvolio.

I have been on the Continent since I saw you.

I have eaten frogs.

I saw Monkhouse t'other day, and Mrs. M. being too poorly to admit of company, the annual goosepie was sent to Russell Street, and with its capacity has fed "a hundred head" (not of Aristotle's) but "of Elia's friends."

Mrs. Monkhouse is sadly confined, but chearful.

This packet is going off, and I have neither time, place nor solitude for a longer letter.

Will you do me the favour to forward the other volume to Southey?

Mary is perfectly well, and joins me in kindest remembrances to you all.

[*Signature cut away.*]

CCCLVI. — TO MR. AND MRS. J. D.
COLLIER

Twelfth Day, 1823.

The pig was above my feeble praise. It was a dear pigmy. There was some contention as to who should have the ears, but in spite of his obstinacy (deaf as these little creatures are to advice) I contrived to get at one of them.

It came in boots too, which I took as a favour. Generally those petty toes, pretty toes! are missing. But I suppose he wore them, to look taller.

He must have been the least of his race. His little foots would have gone into the silver slipper. I take him to have been Chinese, and a female.

If Evelyn could have seen him, he would never have farrowed two such prodigious volumes, seeing how much good can be contained in — how small a compass!

He crackled delicately.

John Collier, Junior, has sent me a poem which (without the smallest bias from the aforesaid present, believe me) I pronounce *sterling*.

I set about Evelyn, and finished the first volume in the course of a natural day. To-day I attack the second. — Parts are very interesting.

I left a blank at top of my letter, not being determined *which* to address it to, so farmer and farmer's wife will please to divide our thanks. May your granaries be full, and your rats empty, and your chickens plump, and your envious neighbours lean, and your labourers busy, and you as idle and as happy as the day is long!

VIVE L'AGRICULTURE!

Frank Field's marriage of course you have seen in the papers, and that his brother Barron is expected home.

How do you make your pigs so little?

They are vastly engaging at that age.

I was so myself.

Now I am a disagreeable old hog —

A middle-aged-gentleman-and-a-half.

My faculties, (thank God!) are not much impaired.

I have my sight, hearing, taste, pretty perfect; and can read the Lord's Prayer in common type, by the help of a candle, without making many mistakes.

Believe me, that while my faculties last, I shall ever cherish a proper appreciation of your many kindnesses in this way; and that the last lingering relish of past flavours upon my dying memory will be the smack of that little ear. It was the left ear, which is lucky. Many happy returns (not of the pig) but of the New Year to both.

Mary for her share of the pig and the memoirs desires to send the same.

Dear Mr. C. and Mrs. C., yours truly,
C. LAMB

CCCLVII.— TO BERNARD BARTON

January 9, 1823.

“Throw yourself on the world without any rational plan of support, beyond what the chance employ of booksellers would afford you”!!!

Throw yourself rather, my dear Sir, from the steep Tarpeian rock, slap-dash headlong upon iron spikes. If you had but five consolatory minutes between the desk and the bed, make much of them, and live a century in them, rather than turn slave to the booksellers. They are Turks and Tartars, when they have poor authors at their beck. Hitherto you have been at arm's length from them. Come not within their grasp. I have known many authors for bread, some repining, others envying the blessed security of a counting house, all agreeing they had rather have been taylors, weavers, what not? rather than the things they were. I have known some starved, some to go mad, one dear friend literally dying in a workhouse. You know not what a rapacious, dishonest set those booksellers are. Ask even Southey, who (a single case almost) has made a fortune by book drudgery, what he has found them. O you know not, may you

never know! the miseries of subsisting by authorship. 'Tis a pretty appendage to a situation like yours or mine, but a slavery worse than all slavery to be a bookseller's dependent, to drudge your brains for pots of ale and breasts of mutton, to change your free thoughts and voluntary numbers for ungracious *task-work*. Those fellows hate *us*. The reason I take to be, that, contrary to other trades, in which the master gets all the credit (a jeweller or silversmith for instance), and the journeyman, who really does the fine work, is in the background, in *our* work the world gives all the credit to us, whom *they* consider as *their* journeymen, and therefore do they hate us, and cheat us, and oppress us, and would wring the blood of us out, to put another sixpence in their mechanic pouches. I contend that a bookseller has a *relative honesty* towards authors, not like his honesty to the rest of the world. B[aldwin], who first engag'd me as Elia, has not paid me up yet (nor any of us without repeated mortifying applials), yet how the knave fawned while I was of service to him! Yet I dare say the fellow is punctual in settling his milk-score, &c. Keep to your bank, and the bank will keep you. Trust not to the public, you may hang, starve, drown yourself, for anything that worthy *Personage* cares. I bless every star that Providence, not seeing good to make me independent, has seen it next good to settle me upon the stable foundation of Lead-

hall. Sit down, good B. B., in the banking-office; what, is there not from six to eleven P. M. six days in the week, and is there not all Sunday? Fie, what a superfluity of man's-time, if you could think so! Enough for relaxation, mirth, converse, poetry, good thoughts, quiet thoughts. O the corroding, torturing, tormenting thoughts, that disturb the brain of the unlucky wight who must draw upon it for daily sustenance? Henceforth I retract all my fond complaints of mercantile employment, look upon them as lovers' quarrels. I was but half in earnest. Welcome, dead timber of a desk, that makes me live. A little grumbling is a wholesome medicine for the spleen; but in my inner heart do I approve and embrace this our close but unharrassing way of life. I am quite serious. If you can send me Fox, I will not keep it six *weeks*, and will return it, with warm thanks to yourself and friend, without blot or dog's ear. You much oblige me by this kindness. Yours truly, C. LAMB

Please to direct to me at India House in future. [I am] not always at Russell St.

CCCLVIII.—TO JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

January 23, 1823.

Dear Payne, — I have no mornings (my day begins at 5 P. M.) to transact business in, or talents for it, so I employ Mary, who has seen Rob-

ertson, who says that the piece which is to be opera-fied was sent to you six weeks since by a Mr. Hunter, whose journey has been delayed, but he supposes you have it by this time. On receiving it back properly done, the rest of your dues will be forthcoming. You have received £30 from Harwood, I hope? Bishop was at the theatre when Mary called, and he has put your other piece into C. Kemble's hands (the piece you talk of offering Elliston) and C. K. sent down word that he had not yet had time to read it. So stand your affairs at present. Glossop has got the *Murderer*. Will you address him on the subject, or shall I — that is, Mary? She says you must write more *showable* letters about these matters, for, with all our trouble of crossing out this word, and giving a cleaner turn to th' other, and folding down at this part, and squeezing an obnoxious epithet into a corner, she can hardly communicate their contents without offence. What, man, put less gall in your ink or write me a biting tragedy! C. LAMB

CCCLIX. — TO WILLIAM AYRTON

February 2, 1823.

Dear Ayrton, — The Burneys and Paynes dine with us on Wednesday at half-past four. It will give us great pleasure (what a canting phrase!) In short, lad, will Mrs. A. and your harmonious self join them? Get pen and ink forthwith and say so. Yours truly, C. LAMB

CCCLX.—TO JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

February 9, 1823.

My dear Miss Lamb,— I have enclosed for you Mr. Payne's piece called *Grandpapa*, which I regret to say is not thought to be of the nature that will suit this theatre ; but as there appears to be much merit in it, Mr. Kemble strongly recommends that you should send it to the English Opera House, for which it seems to be excellently adapted. As you have already been kind enough to be our medium of communication with Mr. Payne, I have imposed this trouble upon you ; but if you do not like to act for Mr. Payne in the business, and have no means of disposing of the piece, I will forward it to Paris or elsewhere as you think he may prefer.

Very truly yours, HENRY ROBERTSON

Dear P., — We have just received the above, and want your instructions. It strikes me as a very merry little piece, that should be played by *very young actors*. It strikes me that Miss Clara Fisher would play the *boy* exactly. She is just such a forward chit. No young *man* would do it without its appearing absurd, but in a girl's hands it would have just all the reality that a short dream of an act requires. Then for the sister, if Miss Stevenson that was, were Miss Stevenson and younger, they two would carry it off. I do not know who they have got in that young line, besides Miss C. F., at Drury, nor how you would like Elliston to have it — has he not had it? I am thick with Arnold, but I have always heard that the very slender profits of the English Opera House do not admit of his giving above a trifle, or next to none, for a piece

of this kind. Write me what I should do, what you would ask, &c. The music (printed) is returned with the piece, and the French original. Tell Mr. Grattan I thank him for his book, which as far as I have read it is a very *companionable one*. I have but just received it. It came the same hour with your packet from Covent Garden, *i. e.* yesternight late, to my summer residence, where, tell Kenney, the cow is quiet. Love to all at Versailles. Write quickly. C. L.

I have no acquaintance with Kemble at all, having only met him once or twice; but any information, &c., I can get from R., who is a good fellow, you may command. I am sorry the rogues are so dilatory, but I distinctly believe they mean to fulfil their engagement. I am sorry you are not here to see to these things. I am a poor man of business, but command me to the short extent of my tether. My sister's kind remembrance ever. C. L.

CCCLXI. — TO BERNARD BARTON

February 17, 1823.

My dear Sir, — I have read quite through the ponderous folio of G[eorge] F[ox]. I think Sewell has been judicious in omitting certain parts, as for instance where G. F. *has* revealed to him the natures of all the creatures in their names, as Adam had. He luckily turns aside from that com-

pendious study of natural history, which might have superseded Buffon, to his proper spiritual pursuits, only just hinting what a philosopher he might have been. The ominous passage is near the beginning of the book. It is clear he means a physical knowledge, without trope or figure. Also, pretences to miraculous healing and the like are more frequent than I should have suspected from the epitome in Sewell. He is nevertheless a great spiritual man, and I feel very much obliged by your procuring me the loan of it. How I like the Quaker phrases, though I think they were hardly completed till Woolman. A pretty little manual of Quaker language (with an endeavour to explain them) might be gathered out of his book. Could not you do it?

I have read through G. F. without finding any explanation of the term *first volume* in the title page. It takes in all, both his life and his death. Are there more last words of him? Pray, how may I venture to return it to Mr. Shewell at Ipswich? I fear to send such a treasure by a stage coach. Not that I am afraid of the coachman or the guard *reading it*. But it might be lost. Can you put me in a way of sending it in safety? The kind-hearted owner trusted it to me for six months. I think I was about as many days in getting through it, and I do not think that I skipt a word of it. I have quoted G. F. in my *Quaker's Meeting*, as having said he was "lifted

up in spirit" (which I felt at the time to be not a Quaker phrase), "and the judge and jury were as dead men under his feet." I find no such words in his *Journal*, and I did not get them from Sewell, and the latter sentence I am sure I did not mean to invent. I must have put some other Quaker's words into his mouth. Is it a fatality in me, that everything I touch turns into a lye? I once quoted two lines from a translation of Dante, which Hazlitt very greatly admired, and quoted in a book as proof of the stupendous power of that poet, but no such lines are to be found in the translation, which has been searched for the purpose. I must have dreamed them, for I am quite certain I did not forge them knowingly. What a misfortune to have a lying memory!

Yes, I have seen Miss Coleridge, and wish I had just such a daughter. God love her—to think that she should have had to toil thro' five octavos of that cursed (I forgot I write to a Quaker) *Abbeypony History*, and then to abridge them to three, and all for £113. At her years, to be doing stupid Jesuit's Latin into English, when she should be reading or writing romances. Heaven send her uncle do not breed her up a Quarterly Reviewer!—which reminds me that he has spoken very respectfully of you in the last number, which is the next thing to having a review all to one's self. Your description of Mr. Mitford's place makes me long for a pippin and

some caraways and a cup of sack in his orchard,
when the sweets of the night come in.

Farewell.

C. LAMB

CCCLXII. — TO WALTER WILSON

February 24, 1823.

Dear W., — I write that you may not think me neglectful, not that I have anything to say. In answer to your questions, it was at *your* house I saw an edition of *Roxana*, the preface to which stated that the author had left out that part of it which related to Roxana's daughter persisting in imagining herself to be so, in spite of the mother's denial, from certain hints she had picked up, and throwing herself continually in her mother's way (as Savage is said to have done in *his*, prying in at windows to get a glimpse of her), and that it was by advice of Southern, who objected to the circumstances as being untrue, when the rest of the story was founded on fact; which shows S. to have been a stupid-ish fellow. The incidents so resemble Savage's story, that I taxed Godwin with taking Falconer from his life by Dr. Johnson. You should have the edition (if you have not parted with it), for I saw it never but at your place at the Mews' Gate, nor did I then read it to compare it with my own; only I know the daughter's curiosity is the best part of *my Roxana*. The prologue you speak of was mine, so named, but not worth much. You ask me for

two or three pages of verse. I have not written so much since you knew me. I am altogether prosaic. Maybe I may touch off a sonnet in time. I do not prefer *Colonel Jack* to either *Robinson Crusoe* or *Roxana*. I only spoke of the beginning of it, his childish history. The rest is poor. I do not know anywhere any good character of De Foe besides what you mention. I do not know that Swift mentions him. Pope does. I forget if D'Israeli has. Dunlop I think has nothing of him. He is quite new ground, and scarce known beyond *Crusoe*. I do not know who wrote *Quarll*. I never thought of *Quarll* as having an author. It is a poor imitation; the monkey is the best in it, and his pretty dishes made of shells. Do you know the paper in the *Englishman* by Sir Richard Steele, giving an account of Selkirk? It is admirable, and has all the germs of *Crusoe*. You must quote it entire. Captain G. Carleton wrote his own *Memoirs*; they are about Lord Peterborough's campaign in Spain, and a good book. *Puzzelli* puzzles me, and I am in a cloud about *Donald M'Leod*. I never heard of them; so you see, my dear Wilson, what poor assistances I can give in the way of information. I wish your book out, for I shall like to see anything about De Foe or from you.

Your old friend, C. LAMB

From my and your old compound.

CCCLXIII. — TO BERNARD BARTON

March 11, 1823.

Dear Sir, — The approbation of my little book by your sister is very pleasing to me. The Quaker incident did not happen to me, but to Carlisle the surgeon, from whose mouth I have twice heard it, at an interval of ten or twelve years, with little or no variation, and have given it as exactly as I could remember it. The gloss which your sister, or you, have put upon it does not strike me as correct. Carlisle drew no inference from it against the honesty of the Quakers, but only in favour of their surprising coolness — that they should be capable of committing a good joke, with an utter insensibility to its being any jest at all. I have reason to believe in the truth of it, because, as I have said, I heard him repeat it without variation at such an interval. The story loses sadly in print, for Carlisle is the best story-teller I ever heard. The idea of the discovery of roasting pigs, I also borrowed, from my friend Manning, and am willing to confess both my plagiarisms.

Should fate ever so order it that you shall be in town with your sister, mine bids me say that she shall have great pleasure in being introduced to her. I think I must give up the cause of the bank — from nine to nine is galley-slavery, but I hope it is but temporary. Your endeavour at explaining Fox's insight into the natures of animals must fail, as I shall transcribe the passage. It appears

to me that he stopt short in time, and was on the brink of falling with his friend Naylor, my favourite. The book shall be forthcoming whenever your friend can make convenient to call for it.

They have dragged me again into the *Magazine*, but I feel the spirit of the thing in my own mind quite gone. "Some brains" (I think Ben Jonson says it) "will endure but one skimming." We are about to have an inundation of poetry from the Lakes, Wordsworth and Southey are coming up strong from the North. The she Coleridges have taken flight, to my regret. With Sara's own-made acquisitions, her unaffectedness and no-pretensions are beautiful. You might pass an age with her without suspecting that she knew anything but her mother's tongue. I don't mean any reflection on Mrs. Coleridge here. I had better have said her vernacular idiom. Poor C., I wish he had a home to receive his daughter in. But he is but as a stranger or a visitor in this world.

How did you like Hartley's sonnets? The first, at least, is vastly fine. Lloyd has been in town a day or two on business, and is perfectly well. I am ashamed of the shabby letters I send, but I am by nature anything but neat. Therein my mother bore me no Quaker. I never could seal a letter without dropping the wax on one side, besides scalding my fingers. I never had a seal, too, of my own. Writing to a great man [Sir Walter Scott] lately, who is moreover very heraldic, I borrowed a seal of a friend, who by the female side quarters

the Protectorial Arms of Cromwell. How they must have puzzled my correspondent ! My letters are generally charged as double at the post-office, from their inveterate clumsiness of foldure. So you must not take it disrespectful to yourself if I send you such ungainly scraps. I think I lose £100 a year at the India House, owing solely to my want of neatness in making up accounts. How I puzzle 'em out at last is the wonder. I have to do with millions. *I?*

It is time to have done my incoherencies. Believe me, yours truly,

C. LAMB

CCCLXIV. — TO WILLIAM AYRTON

Cards and cold mutton in Russell Street on Friday at eight and nine.

Gin and jokes from half-past that time to twelve.

Pass this on to MR. PAINE; and apprise Martin thereof.

CCCLXV. — TO BERNARD BARTON

April 5, 1823.

Dear Sir, — You must think me ill mannered not to have replied to your first letter sooner, but I have an ugly habit of aversion from letter writing, which makes me an unworthy correspondent. I have had no spring, or cordial call to the occupation of late. I have been not well lately, which

must be my lame excuse. Your poem, which I consider very affecting, found me engaged about a humorous Paper for the *London*, which I had called a "Letter to an *Old Gentleman* whose Education had been neglected;" and when it was done Taylor and Hessey would not print it, and it discouraged me from doing anything else, so I took up Scott, where I had scribbled some petulant remarks, and for a make-shift father'd them on Ritson. It is obvious I could not make your poem a part of them, and as I did not know whether I should ever be able to do to my mind what you suggested, I thought it not fair to keep back the verses for the chance.

Mr. Mitford's sonnet I like very well; but as I also have my reasons against interfering at all with the editorial arrangement of the *London*, I transmitted it (not in my own handwriting) to them, who I doubt not will be glad to insert it. What eventual benefit it can be to you (otherwise than that a kind man's wish is a benefit) I cannot conjecture. Your Society are eminently men of business, and will probably regard you as an idle fellow, possibly disown you, that is to say, if you had put your own name to a sonnet of that sort, but they cannot excommunicate Mr. Mitford, therefore I thoroughly approve of printing the said verses.

When I see any Quaker names to the Concert of Antient Music, or as Directors of the British Institution, or bequeathing medals to Oxford for

the best classical themes, &c. — then I shall begin to hope they will emancipate you. But what as a Society can they do for you? you would not accept a commission in the Army, nor they be likely to procure it; posts in Church or State have they none in their giving; and then if they disown you — think — you must live “a man forbid.”

I wish'd for you yesterday. I dined in Parnassus, with Wordsworth, Coleridge, Rogers, and Tom Moore — half the Poetry of England constellated and clustered in Gloster Place! It was a delightful even! Coleridge was in his finest vein of talk, had all the talk, and let 'em talk as evilly as they do of the envy of poets, I am sure not one there but was content to be nothing but a listener. The Muses were dumb, while Apollo lectured on his and their fine Art. It is a lie that poets are envious, I have known the best of them, and can speak to it, that they give each other their merits, and are the kindest critics as well as best authors.

I am scribbling a muddy epistle with an aching head, for we did not quaff Hippocrene last night. Marry, it was Hippocras rather. Pray accept this as a letter in the meantime, and do me the favour to mention my respects to Mr. Mitford, who is so good as to entertain good thoughts of *Elia*, but don't show this almost impertinent scrawl. I will write more respectfully next time, for believe me, if not in words, in feelings, yours most so.

NOTE

[Moore wrote in his *Journal*: "Dined at Mr. Monkhouse's (a gentleman I had never seen before) on Wordsworth's invitation, who lives there whenever he comes to town. A singular party. Coleridge, Rogers, Wordsworth and wife, Charles Lamb (the hero at present of the *London Magazine*) and his sister (the poor woman who went mad in a diligence on the way to Paris), and a Mr. Robinson, one of the *minora sidera* of this constellation of the Lakes; the host himself, a Mæcenas of the school, contributing nothing but good dinners and silence. Charles Lamb, a clever fellow, certainly, but full of villainous and abortive puns, which he miscarries of every minute. Some excellent things, however, have come from him."

Crabb Robinson writes: "April 4th. — Dined at Monkhouse's. Our party consisted of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, Moore, and Rogers. Five poets of very unequal worth and most disproportionate popularity, whom the public probably would arrange in the very inverse order, except that it would place Moore above Rogers. During this afternoon, Coleridge alone displayed any of his peculiar talent. He talked much and well. I have not for years seen him in such excellent health and spirits. His subjects metaphysical criticism — Wordsworth he chiefly talked to. Rogers occasionally let fall a remark. Moore seemed conscious of his inferiority. He was very attentive to Coleridge, but seemed to relish Lamb, whom he sat next. Lamb was in a good frame — kept himself within bounds and was only cheerful at last. . . . I was at the bottom of the table, where I very ill performed my part. . . . I walked home late with Lamb."]

CCCLXVI. — TO B. W. PROCTER

April 13, 1823.

Dear Lad, — You must think me a brute beast, a rhinoceros, never to have acknowledged the receipt of your precious present. But indeed I

am none of those shocking things, but have arrived at that indisposition to letter-writing, which would make it a hard exertion to write three lines to a king to spare a friend's life. Whether it is that the *Magazine* paying me so much a page, I am loath to throw away composition — how much a sheet do you give your correspondents? I have hung up Pope, and a gem it is, in my town room; I hope for your approval. Though it accompanies the *Essay on Man*, I think that was not the poem he is here meditating. He would have looked up, somehow affectedly, if he were just conceiving “Awake, my St. John.” Neither is he in the *Rape of the Lock* mood exactly. I think he has just made out the last lines of the *Epistle to Jervis*, between gay and tender, —

And other beauties envy Wortley's eyes.

I'll be damn'd if that is n't the line. He is brooding over it, with a dreamy phantom of Lady Mary floating before him. He is thinking which is the earliest possible day and hour that she will first see it. What a miniature piece of gentility it is! Why did you give it me? I do not like you enough to give you anything so good.

I have dined with T. Moore and breakfasted with Rogers, since I saw you; have much to say about them when we meet, which I trust will be in a week or two. I have been over-watched and over-poeted since Wordsworth has been in town. I was obliged for health's sake to wish him gone:

but now he is gone I feel a great loss. I am going to Dalston to recruit, and have serious thoughts — of altering my condition, that is, of taking to sobriety. What do you advise me?

T. Moore asked me your address in a manner which made me believe he meant to call upon you.

Rogers spake very kindly of you, as everybody does, and none with so much reason as your

C. L.

CCCLXVII. — TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

April 25, 1823.

Dear Miss H., — Mary has such an invincible reluctance to any epistolary exertion, that I am sparing her a mortification by taking the pen from her. The plain truth is, she writes such a pimping, mean, detestable hand, that she is ashamed of the formation of her letters. There is an essential poverty and abjectness in the frame of them. They look like begging letters. And then she is sure to omit a most substantial word in the second draught (for she never ventures an epistle without a foul copy first) which is obliged to be interlined, which spoils the neatest *epistle*, you know. Her figures, 1, 2, 3, 4, &c., where she has occasion to express numerals, as in the date (25 Apr., 1823), are not figures, but figurantes. And the combined posse go staggering up and down shameless as drunkards in the day time. It is no

better when she rules her paper, her lines are “not less erring” than her words — a sort of unnatural parallel lines, that are perpetually threatening to meet, which you know is quite contrary to Euclid. Her very blots are not bold like this [*here a bold blot*], but poor smears [*here a poor smear*] half left in and half scratched out with another smear left in their place. I like a clean letter. A bold free hand, and a fearless flourish. Then she has always to go thro’ them (a second operation) to dot her *i*’s, and cross her *t*’s. I don’t think she can make a corkscrew, if she tried — which has such a fine effect at the end or middle of an epistle, and fills up. [*Here Lamb has made a corkscrew two inches long.*] There is a corkscrew, one of the best I ever drew. By the way, what incomparable whiskey that was of Monkhouse’s. But if I am to write a letter, let me begin, and not stand flourishing like a fencer at a fair.

It gives me great pleasure (the letter now begins) to hear that you got down smoothly, and that Mrs. Monkhouse’s spirits are so good and enterprising. It shews, whatever her posture may be, that her mind at least is not supine. I hope the excursion will enable the former to keep pace with its out-stripping neighbour. Pray present our kindest wishes to her, and all. (That sentence should properly have come in the Postscript, but we airy mercurial spirits, there is no keeping us in.) Time — as was said of one of us — toils after us in vain. I am afraid our co-visit with

Coleridge was a dream. I shall not get away before the end (or middle) of June, and then you will be frog-hopping at Boulogne. And besides I think the Gilmans would scarce trust him with us, I have a malicious knack at cutting of apron-strings. The Saints' days you speak of have long since fled to heaven, with Astræa, and the cold piety of the age lacks fervour to recall them — only Peter left his key — the iron one of the two, that shuts amain — and that 's the reason I am lock'd up. Meanwhile of afternoons we pick up primroses at Dalston, and Mary corrects me when I call 'em cowslips. God bless you all, and pray remember me euphoniously to Mr. Gnwellegan. That Lee Priory must be a dainty bower, is it built of flints, and does it stand at Kingsgate?

CCCLXVIII. — TO MISS HUTCHINSON (?)

No date.

Apropos of birds, — the other day at a large dinner, being call'd upon for a toast, I gave, as the best toast I knew, "Woodcock toast," which was drunk with three cheers.

Yours affectionately, C. LAMB

CCCLXIX. — TO JOHN BATES DIBDIN

1823.

It is hard when a gentleman cannot remain concealed, who affecteth obscurity with greater

avidity than most do seek to have their good deeds brought to light; to have a prying inquisitive finger (to the danger of its own scorching) busied in removing the little peck measure (scripturally a bushel) under which one had hoped to bury his small candle. The receipt of fern-seed, I think, in this curious age, would scarce help a man to walk invisible.

Well, I am discovered — and thou thyself, who thoughtest to shelter under the pease-cod of initiality (a stale and shallow device), art no less dragged to light — Thy slender anatomy — thy skeletonian D—— fleshed and sinewed out to the plump expansion of six characters — thy tuneful genealogy deduced —

By the way, what a name is Timothy!

Lay it down, I beseech thee, and in its place take up the properer sound of Timotheus.

Then mayst thou with unblushing fingers handle the lyre “familiar to the D——n name.”

With much difficulty have I traced thee to thy lurking-place. Many a goodly name did I run over, bewildered between Dorrien, and Doxat, and Dover, and Dakin, and Daintry — a wilderness of D’s — till at last I thought I had hit it — my conjectures wandering upon a melancholy Jew — you wot the Israelite upon Change — Master Daniels — a contemplative Hebrew — to the which guess I was the rather led, by the consideration that most of his nation are great readers.

Nothing is so common as to see them in the

Jews' Walk, with a bundle of script in one hand, and the *Man of Feeling*, or a volume of Sterne, in the other.

I am a rogue if I can recollect what manner of face thou carriest, though thou seemest so familiar with mine. If I remember, thou didst not dimly resemble the man Daniels, whom at first I took thee for — a care-worn, mortified, economical, commercio-political countenance, with an agreeable limp in thy gait, if Elia mistake thee not. I think I should shake hands with thee, if I met thee.

NOTE

[John Bates Dibdin, the son of Charles Dibdin the younger and grandson of the great Charles Dibdin, was at this time a young man of about twenty-four, engaged as a clerk in a shipping office in the city. I borrow from Canon Ainger an interesting letter from a sister of Dibdin on the beginning of the correspondence :

“ My brother had . . . constant occasion to conduct the giving or taking of cheques, as it might be, at the India House. There he always selected ‘ the little clever man ’ in preference to the other clerks. At that time the *Elia Essays* were appearing in print. No one had the slightest conception who ‘ Elia ’ was. He was talked of everywhere, and everybody was trying to find him out, but without success. At last, from the style and manner of conveying his ideas and opinions on different subjects, my brother began to suspect that Lamb was the individual so widely sought for, and wrote some lines to him, anonymously, sending them by post to his residence, with the hope of sifting him on the subject. Although Lamb could not *know* who sent him the lines, yet he looked very hard at the writer of them the next time they met, when he walked up, as usual, to Lamb’s desk in the most unconcerned manner, to transact the necessary business. Shortly after, when they were

again in conversation, something dropped from Lamb's lips which convinced his hearer, beyond a doubt, that his suspicions were correct. He therefore wrote some more lines (anonymously, as before), beginning, —

I've found thee out, O Elia!

and sent them to Colbrook Row. The consequence was that at their next meeting Lamb produced the lines, and after much laughing, confessed himself to be *Elia*. This led to a warm friendship between them."

Dibdin's letter of discovery was signed D. Hence Lamb's fumbling after his Christian name, which he probably knew all the time. — E. V. LUCAS.]

CCCLXX. — TO BERNARD BARTON

May 3, 1823.

Dear Sir, — I am vexed to be two letters in your debt, but I have been quite out of the vein lately. A philosophical treatise is wanting, of the causes of the backwardness with which persons after a certain time of life set about writing a letter. I always feel as if I had nothing to say, and the performance generally justifies the presentiment. Taylor and Hessey did foolishly in not admitting the sonnet. Surely it might have followed the B. B.

I agree with you in thinking Bowring's paper better than the former. I will inquire about my Letter to the Old Gentleman, but I expect it to *go in*, after those to the Young Gentleman are completed. I do not exactly see why the Goose and little Goslings should emblemize a *Quaker poet that has no children*. But after all — perhaps it

is a Pelican. The Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin around it I cannot decypher. The songster of the night pouring out her effusions amid a silent Meeting of Madge Owlets, would be at least intelligible.

A full pause here comes upon me, as if I had not a word more left. I will shake my brain. Once—twice—nothing comes up. George Fox recommends waiting on these occasions. I wait. Nothing comes. G. Fox—that sets me off again. I have finished the *Journal*, and four hundred more pages of the *Doctrinals*, which I picked up for 7s. 6d. If I get on at this rate, the Society will be in danger of having two Quaker poets—to patronise. I am at Dalston now, but if, when I go back to Covent Garden I find thy friend has not call'd for the *Journal*, thee must put me in a way of sending it; and if it should happen that the lender of it, having that volume, has not the other, I shall be most happy in his accepting the *Doctrinals*, which I shall read but once certainly. It is not a splendid copy, but perfect, save a leaf of index.

I cannot but think the *London* drags heavily. I miss Janus. And O how it misses Hazlitt! Procter too is affronted (as Janus has been) with their abominable curtailment of his things—some meddling editor or other—or phantom of one—for neither he nor Janus know their busy friend. But they always find the best part cut out; and they have done well to cut also. I am

not so fortunate as to be served in this manner, for I would give a clean sum of money in sincerity to leave them handsomely. But the dogs — T. and H. I mean — will not affront me, and what can I do? must I go on to drivelling? *Poor Relations* is tolerable — but where shall I get another subject — or who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I assure you it teases me more than it used to please me.

Ch. Lloyd has published a sort of Quaker poem, he tells me, and that he has order'd me a copy, but I have not got it. Have you seen it? I must leave a little wafer space, which brings me to an apology for a conclusion. I am afraid of looking back, for I feel all this while I have been writing nothing, but it may show I am alive. Believe me, cordially yours,

C. LAMB

CCCLXXI. — TO JOHN BATES DIBDIN

May 6, 1823.

Dear Sir, — Your verses were very pleasant, and I shall like to see more of them — I do not mean *addressed to me*.

I do not know whether you live in town or country, but if it suits your convenience I shall be glad to see you some evening — say Thursday — at 20 Great Russell Street, Covent Garden. If you can come, do not trouble yourself to write. We are old fashion'd people who *drink tea* at six, or not much later, and give cold mutton and

pickle at nine, the good old hour. I assure you (if it suit you) we shall be glad to see you.

My love to Mr. Railton. The same to Mr. Rankin, to the whole Firm indeed.

Yours, &c.,

C. LAMB

CCCLXXII.— TO WILLIAM HONE

May 19, 1823

Dear Sir, — I have been very agreeably entertained with your present, which I found very curious and amusing. What wisecracs our forefathers appear to have been! It should make *us* thankful, who are grown so rational and polite. I should call to thank you for the book, but go home to Dalston at present. I shall beg your acceptance (when I see you) of my little book. I have Ray's *Collections of English Words not generally Used*, 1691; and in page 60 ("North Country words") occurs "*Rynt ye*" — "by your leave," "stand handsomely." As, "Rynt you, witch," quoth Besse Locket to her mother; Proverb, Cheshire. — Doubtless this is the "Aroint" of Shakspeare.

In the same collection I find several Shaksperisms. "Rooky" wood: a Northern word for "reeky," "misty," &c. "Shandy," a North Country word for "wild." Sterne was York.

Your obliged,

C. LAMB

I am at 14 Kingsland Row, Dalston. Will

you take a walk over on Sunday? We dine exactly at four, and shall be most glad to see you. If I don't hear from you (by note to East India House) I will expect you.

CCCLXXIII.—MARY LAMB TO MRS.
RANDAL NORRIS

June 18, 1823.

My dear Friend, — Day after day has passed away, and my brother has said, “I will write to Mrs. [? Mr.] Norris to-morrow,” and therefore I am resolved to write to *Mrs. Norris* to-day, and trust him no longer. We took our places for Sevenoaks, intending to remain there all night in order to see Knole, but when we got there we chang'd our minds, and went on to Tunbridge Wells. About a mile short of the Wells the coach stopped at a little inn, and I saw, “Lodgings to let” on a little, very little house opposite. I ran over the way, and secured them before the coach drove away, and we took immediate possession: it proved a very comfortable place, and we remained there nine days. The first evening, as we were wandering about, we met a lady, the wife of one of the India House clerks, with whom we had been slightly acquainted some years ago, which slight acquaintance has been ripened into a great intimacy during the nine pleasant days that we passed at the Wells. She and her two daughters went with us in an open

chaise to Knole, and as the chaise held only five, we mounted Miss James upon a little horse, which she rode famously. I was very much pleased with Knole, and still more with Penshurst, which we also visited. We saw Frant and the Rocks, and made much use of your Guide Book, only Charles lost his way once going by the map. We were in constant exercise the whole time, and spent our time so pleasantly that when we came here on Monday we missed our new friends and found ourselves very dull. We are by the seaside in a *still less* house, and we have exchanged a very pretty landlady for a very ugly one, but she is equally attractive to us. We eat turbot, and we drink smuggled Hollands, and we walk up hill and down hill all day long. In the little intervals of rest that we allow ourselves I teach Miss James French; she picked up a few words during her foreign tour with us, and she has had a hankering after it ever since.

We came from Tunbridge Wells in a post-chaise, and would have seen Battle Abbey on the way, but it is only shewn on a Monday. We are trying to coax Charles into a Monday's excursion. And Bexhill we are also thinking about. Yesterday evening we found out by chance the most beautiful view I ever saw. It is called "The Lovers' Seat." . . . You have been here, therefore you must have seen [it, or] is it only Mr. and Mrs. Faint who have visited Hastings? [Tell Mrs.] Faint that though in my haste to get

housed I d[ecided on] . . . ice's lodgings, yet it comforted all th . . . to know that I had a place in view.

I suppose you are so busy that it is not fair to ask you to write me a line to say how you are going on. Yet if any one of you have half an hour to spare for that purpose, it will be most thankfully received. Charles joins with me in love to you all together, and to each one in particular upstairs and downstairs.

Yours most affectionately, M. LAMB

CCCLXXIV. — TO BERNARD BARTON

July 10, 1823.

Dear Sir, — I shall be happy to read the MS. and to forward it; but T. and H. must judge for themselves of publication. If it prove interesting (as I doubt not) I shall not spare to say so, you may depend upon it. Suppose you direct it to Accountant's Office, India House.

I am glad you have met with some sweetening circumstances to your unpalatable draught. I have just returned from Hastings, where are exquisite views and walks, and where I have given up my soul to walking, and I am now suffering sedentary contrasts. I am a long time reconciling to town after one of these excursions. Home is become strange, and will remain so yet a while. Home is the most unforgiving of friends and always resents absence; I know its

old cordial looks will return, but they are slow in clearing up. That is one of the features of this *our* galley slavery, that peregrination ended makes things worse. I felt out of water (with all the sea about me) at Hastings, and just as I had learned to domiciliate there, I must come back to find a home which is no home. I abused Hastings, but learned its value. There are spots. inland bays, &c., which realise the notions of Juan Fernandez.

The best thing I lit upon by accident was a small country church (by whom or when built unknown) standing bare and single in the midst of a grove, with no house or appearance of habitation within a quarter of a mile, only passages diverging from it thro' beautiful woods to so many farm houses. There it stands, like the first idea of a church, before parishioners were thought of, nothing but birds for its congregation, or like a hermit's oratory (the hermit dead), or a mausoleum, its effect singularly impressive, like a church found in a desert isle to startle Crusoe with a home image; you must make out a vicar and a congregation from fancy, for surely none come there. Yet it wants not its pulpit, and its font, and all the seemly additaments of *our* worship.

Southey has attacked *Elia* on the score of infidelity, in the *Quarterly*, article, *Progress of Infidels* [*Infidelity*]. I had not, nor have, seen the *Monthly*. He might have spared an old friend

such a construction of a few careless flights, that meant no harm to religion. If all his *unguarded* expressions on the subject were to be collected —

But I love and respect Southey, and will not retort. I *bate his review*, and his being a reviewer.

The hint he has dropp'd will knock the sale of the book on the head, which was almost at a stop before.

Let it stop. There is corn in Egypt, while there is cash at Leadenhall. You and I are something besides being writers, thank God.

Yours truly,

C. L.

NOTE

[In an article in the *Quarterly* for January, 1823, in a review of a work by Grégoire on Deism in France, under the title *The Progress of Infidelity*, Southey had a reference to *Elia* in the following terms: "Unbelievers have not always been honest enough thus to express their real feelings; but this we know concerning them, that when they have renounced their birth-right of hope, they have not been able to divest themselves of fear. From the nature of the human mind this might be presumed, and in fact it is so. They may deaden the heart and stupefy the conscience, but they cannot destroy the imaginative faculty. There is a remarkable proof of this in *Elia's Essays*, a book which wants only a sounder religious feeling, to be as delightful as it is original."

"I will not retort." Lamb, as we shall see, changed his mind.

"Almost at a stop before." *Elia* was never popular until long after Lamb's death. It did not reach a second edition until 1836. There are now several new editions every year. — E. V. LUCAS.]

CCCLXXV.— TO BERNARD BARTON

September 2, 1823.

Dear B. B.,—What will you say to my not writing? You cannot say I do not write now. Hessey has not used your kind sonnet, nor have I seen it. Pray send me a copy. Neither have I heard any more of your friend's MS., which I will reclaim, whenever you please. When you come London-ward you will find me no longer in Covent Garden. I have a cottage, in Colebrook Row, Islington. A cottage, for it is detach'd; a white house, with six good rooms; the New River (rather elderly by this time) runs (if a moderate walking pace can be so termed) close to the foot of the house; and behind is a spacious garden, with vines (I assure you), pears, strawberries, parsnips, leeks, carrots, cabbages, to delight the heart of old Alcinoüs. You enter without passage into a cheerful dining-room, all studded over and rough with old books, and above is a lightsome drawing-room, three windows, full of choice prints. I feel like a great Lord, never having had a house before.

The *London* I fear falls off. I linger among its creaking rafters, like the last rat. It will topple down, if they don't get some buttresses. They have pull'd down three. W. Hazlitt, Proctor, and their best stay, kind light-hearted Wainwright—their Janus. The best is, neither of our fortunes is concern'd in it.



I heard of you from Mr. Pulham this morning, and that gave a fillip to my laziness, which has been intolerable. But I am so taken up with pruning and gardening, quite a new sort of occupation to me. I have gather'd my jargonels, but my Windsor pears are backward. The former

were of exquisite raciness. I do now sit under my own vine, and contemplate the growth of vegetable nature. I can now understand in what sense they speak of *father Adam*. I recognise the paternity, while I watch my tulips. I almost *fell* with him, for the first day I turned a drunken gard'ner (as he let in the serpent) into my Eden, and he laid about him, lopping off some choice boughs, &c., which hung over from a neighbour's garden, and in his blind zeal laid waste a shade, which had sheltered their window from the gaze of passers-by. The old gentlewoman (fury made her not handsome) could scarcely be reconciled by all my fine words. There was no buttering her parsnips. She talk'd of the law. What a lapse to commit on the first day of my happy "garden-state."

I hope you transmitted the Fox-Journal to its owner with suitable thanks.

Mr. Cary, the Dante-man, dines with me to-day. He is a model of a country parson, lean (as a curate ought to be), modest, sensible, no obtruder of church dogmas, quite a different man from Southey: you would like him.

Pray accept this for a letter, and believe me, with sincere regards,

Yours,

C. L.

CCCLXXVI. — TO THOMAS ALLSOP

September 6, 1823.

Dear Allsop, — I am snugly seated at the cottage ; Mary is well but weak, and comes home on *Monday* ; she will soon be strong enough to see her friends here. In the mean time will you dine with me at half-past four to-morrow ? Ayrton and Mr. Burney are coming.

Colebrook Cottage, left hand side, end of Colebrook Row on the western brink of the New River, a detach'd whitish house.

No answer is required, but come if you can.

C. LAMB

I call'd on you on Sunday. Respects to Mrs. A. and boy.

CCCLXXVII. — TO THOMAS ALLSOP

September 9, 1823.

My dear A., — I am going to ask you to do me the greatest favour which a man can do to another. I want to make my will, and to leave my property in trust for my sister. N. B. I am not *therefore* going to die. — Would it be unpleasant for you to be named for one ? The other two I shall beg the same favour of are Talfourd and Proctor. If you feel reluctant, tell me, and it sha'n't abate one jot of my friendly feeling toward you. Yours ever, C. LAMB

CCCLXXVIII.—TO THOMAS ALLSOP

September 10, 1823.

My dear A.,—Your kindness in accepting my request no words of mine can repay. It has made you overflow into some romance which I should have check'd at another time. I hope it may be in the scheme of Providence that my sister may go first (if ever so little a precedence), myself next, and my good executors survive to remember us with kindness many years. God bless you.

I will set Proctor about the will forthwith.

C. LAMB

CCCLXXIX.—TO THOMAS ALLSOP

September 16, 1823.

My dear Allsop, — I thank you for thinking of my recreation. But I am best here — I feel I am; I have tried town lately, but came back worse. Here I must wait till my loneliness has its natural cure. Besides that, though I am not very sanguine, yet I live in hopes of better news from Fulham, and cannot be out of the way. 'T is ten weeks to-morrow. — I saw Mary a week since; she was in excellent bodily health, but otherwise far from well. But a week or so may give a turn. Love to Mrs. A. and children, and fair weather accompany you.

C. L.

CCCLXXX.—TO THOMAS ALLSOP

September, 1823.

Dear A.,—Your cheese is the best I ever tasted; Mary will tell you so hereafter. She is at home, but has disappointed me. She has gone back rather than improved. However, she has sense enough to value the present, for she is greatly fond of Stilton. Yours is the delicatest rainbow-hued melting piece I ever flavoured. Believe me, I took it the more kindly, following so great a kindness.

Depend upon 't, yours shall be one of the first houses we shall present ourselves at, when we have got our bill of health.

Being both yours and Mrs. Allsop's truly,
C. L. & M. L.

CCCLXXXI.—TO THOMAS ALLSOP

Dear Allsop,—Send me our account; at all events be sure and send me your bill against the Westwoods; I wish to have both, but specially the latter. Show me you can be punctual.

With best loves to Mrs. Allsop, and hopes that you got home comfortably, yours,
C. L.

I want the account that when you come again we may have no business (pronounced *bissnis*) to do.

CCCLXXXII.— TO THOMAS ALLSOP

Dear A., — *To-morrow*, if you please, at four. I walk all the morning, but come home hungry to dinner, as I hope to find you both.

Yours ever, C. L.

CCCLXXXIII.— TO THOMAS ALLSOP

Dear Allsop, — You left me, as you thought, divers *prospectuses*, but all of them except one (which I have parted with) — I mean the small or general prospectus on the quarter of a sheet — have only the last six lines, and what goes before is *unprinted paper*.

So send me by post some real ones, and I'll forward it with Stoddart as warmly as I can.

C. L.

Send me of both sorts, tho' I have one of the larger (the detailed) left.

CCCLXXXIV.— TO BERNARD BARTON

September 17, 1823.

Dear Sir, — I have again been reading your stanzas on Bloomfield, which are the most appropriate that can be imagined, sweet with Doric delicacy. I like that, —

Our more chaste Theocritus, —

just hinting at the fault of the Grecian. I love that stanza ending with, —

Words, phrases, fashions, pass away ;
But Truth and Nature live through all.

But I shall omit in my own copy the one stanza which alludes to Lord B. — I suppose. It spoils the sweetness and oneness of the feeling. Cannot we think of Burns, or Thompson, without sullyng the thought with a reflection out of place upon Lord Rochester? These verses might have been inscribed upon a tomb; are in fact an epitaph; satire does not look pretty upon a tombstone. Besides, there is a quotation in it, always bad in verse; seldom advisable in prose.

I doubt if their having been in a Paper will not prevent T. and H. from insertion, but I shall have a thing to send in a day or two, and shall try them. Omitting that stanza, a *very little* alteration is wanting in the beginning of the next. You see, I use freedom. How happily (I flatter not!) you have brought in his subjects; and (*I suppose*), his favourite measure, though I am not acquainted with any of his writings but the *Farmer's Boy*. He dined with me once, and his manners took me exceedingly.

I rejoice that you forgive my long silence. I continue to estimate my own-roof comforts highly. How could I remain all my life a lodger! My garden thrives (I am told) tho' I have yet reaped nothing but some tiny salad, and

withered carrots. But a garden 's a garden anywhere, and twice a garden in London.

Somehow I cannot relish that word Horkey. Cannot you supply it by circumlocution, and direct the reader by a note to explain that it means the Horkey. But Horkey choaks me in the text. It raises crowds of mean associations, Hawking and sp——g, Gauky, Stalky, Maukin. The sound is everything, in such dulcet modulations 'specially. I like, —

Gilbert Meldrum's sterner tones ;

without knowing who Gilbert Meldrum is. You have slipt in your rhymes as if they grew there, so natural-artificially, or artificial-naturally. There's a vile phrase.

Do you go on with your *Quaker Sonnets* — [to] have 'em ready with Southey's *Book of the Church*? I meditate a letter to S. in the *London*, which perhaps will meet the fate of the Sonnet. [*The letter was published the following October.*]

Excuse my brevity, for I write painfully at office, liable to a hundred callings off. And I can never sit down to an epistle elsewhere. I read or walk. If you return this letter to the post-office, I think they will return fourpence, seeing it is but half a one. Believe me, tho',
entirely yours,
C. L.

CCCLXXXV. — TO CHARLES LLOYD

Autumn, 1823.

Your lines are not to be understood reading on one leg. They are *sinuous*, and to be won with wrestling. I assure you in sincerity that nothing you have done has given me greater satisfaction. Your obscurity, where you are dark, which is seldom, is that of too much meaning, not the painful obscurity which no toil of the reader can dissipate; not the dead vacuum and floundering place in which imagination finds no footing; it is not the dimness of positive darkness, but of distance; and he that reads and not discerns must get a better pair of spectacles. I admire every piece in the collection; I cannot say the first is best; when I do so, the last read rises up in judgment. To your Mother — to your Sister — to Mary dead — they are all weighty with thought and tender with sentiment. Your poetry is like no other: — those cursed Dryads and Pagan trumperies of modern verse have put me out of conceit of the very name of poetry. Your verses are as good and as wholesome as prose; and I have made a sad blunder if I do not leave you with an impression that your present is rarely valued.

CHARLES LAMB

CCCLXXXVI. — TO THOMAS ALLSOP

October 4, 1823.

Dear Sir, — Will Mrs. A. and you dine with us to-morrow at half-past three? Do not think of troubling yourself to send (if you cannot come), as we shall provide only a goose (which is in the house), and your not coming will make no difference in our arrangements.

Your obliged, C. LAMB

CCCLXXXVII. — TO REV. H. F. CARY

October 14, 1823.

Dear Sir, — If convenient, will you give us house room on Saturday next? I can sleep anywhere. If another Sunday suit you better, pray let me know. We were talking of roast *shoulder* of mutton with onion sauce; but I scorn to prescribe to the hospitalities of mine host. With respects to Mrs. C., yours truly, C. LAMB

CCCLXXXVIII. — TO THOMAS ALLSOP

October, 1823.

Dear Sir, — Mary has got a cold, and the nights are dreadful; but at the first indication of spring (*alias* the first dry weather in November early) it is our intention to surprise you early some evening.

Believe me, most truly yours, C. L.

Mary regrets very much Mrs. Allsop's fruitless visit. It made her swear! She was gone to visit Miss Hutchinson, whom she found *out*.

CCCLXXXIX. — TO JOHN BATES DIBDIN

October 28, 1823.

My dear Sir, — Your pig was a *picture* of a pig, and your picture a *pig* of a picture. The former was delicious but evanescent, like a hearty fit of mirth, or the crackling of thorns under a pot; but the latter is an *idea*, and abideth. I never before saw swine upon satin. And then that pretty strawy canopy about him! he seems to purr (rather than grunt) his satisfaction. Such a gentlemanlike porker too! Morland's are absolutely clowns to it. Who the deuce painted it?

I have ordered a little gilt shrine for it, and mean to wear it for a locket; a shirt-pig.

I admire the petty-toes shrouded in a veil of something, not *mud*, but that warm soft consistency with [which] the dust takes in Elysium after a spring shower — it perfectly engloves them.

I cannot enough thank you and your country friend for the delicate double present — the *utile et decorum* — three times have I attempted to write this sentence and failed; which shows that I am not cut out for a pedant.

Sir, — (as I say to Southey) will you come and

see us at our poor cottage of Colebrook to tea to-morrow evening, as early as six? I have some friends coming at that hour.

The panoply which covered your material pig shall be forthcoming. The pig pictorial, with its trappings, domesticate with me.

Your greatly obliged, ELIA

CCCXC. — TO THOMAS ALLSOP

November 7.

Dear Allsop, — Our dinner hour on Sundays is four, at which we shall be most happy to see Mrs. A. and yourself — I mean next Sunday, but I also mean any Sunday. Pray come. I am up to my very ears in business, but pray come.

Yours most sincerely, C. L.

CCCXCI. — TO SARAH HAZLITT

Early November, 1823.

Dear Mrs. H., — Sitting down to write a letter is such a painful operation to Mary, that you must accept me as her proxy. You have seen our house. What I now tell you is literally true. Yesterday week, George Dyer called upon us, at one o'clock (*bright noonday*) on his way to dine with Mrs. Barbauld at Newington. He sat with Mary about half an hour, and took leave. The maid saw him go out from her kitchen window; but suddenly losing sight of him, ran up in a

fright to Mary. G. D., instead of keeping the slip that leads to the gate, had deliberately, staff in hand, in broad open day, marched into the New River. He had not his spectacles on, and you know his absence. Who helped him out, they can hardly tell; but between 'em they got him out, drenched thro' and thro'. A mob collected by that time, and accompanied him in. "Send for the Doctor!" they said: and a one-eyed fellow, dirty and drunk, was fetched from the public house at the end, where it seems he lurks, for the sake of picking up water practice, having formerly had a medal from the Humane Society for some rescue. By his advice, the patient was put between blankets; and when I came home at four to dinner, I found G. D. a-bed, and raving, light-headed with the brandy and water which the doctor had administered. He sung, laughed, whimpered, screamed, babbled of guardian angels, would get up and go home; but we kept him there by force; and by next morning he departed sobered, and seems to have received no injury. All my friends are open-mouthed about having paling before the river, but I cannot see that, because a lunatic chooses to walk into a river with his eyes open at midday, I am any the more likely to be drowned in it, coming home at midnight.

I had the honour of dining at the Mansion House on Thursday last, by special card from the Lord Mayor, who never saw my face, nor I his;

and all from being a writer in a magazine! The dinner costly, served on massy plate, champagne, pines, &c.; forty-seven present, among whom the Chairman and two other directors of the India Company. There's for you! and got away pretty sober! Quite saved my credit!

We continue to like our house prodigiously. Does Mary Hazlitt go on with her novel, or has she begun another? I would not discourage her, tho' we continue to think it (so far) in its present state not saleable.

Our kind remembrances to her and hers and you and yours. Yours truly, C. LAMB

I am pleased that H. liked my letter to the Laureate.

CCCXCII.—TO MRS. PERCY BYSSHE
SHELLEY

November 12, 1823.

Dear Mrs. S., — Our friends from Shacklewell drink tea on Saturday at six; we shall have much pleasure in your joining them.

Yours truly, [*Signature cut off.*]

G. Dyer walk'd into the New River on Sunday week at one o'clock in the daytime! with his eyes open. Mind how you come.

CCCXCIII. — TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

November 21, 1823.

Dear Southey, — The kindness of your note has melted away the mist which was upon me. I have been fighting against a shadow. That accursed *Quarterly Review* had vexed me by a gratuitous speaking, of its own knowledge, that the *Confessions of a Drunkard* was a genuine description of the state of the writer. Little things, that are not ill meant, may produce much ill. *That* might have injured me alive and dead. I am in a public office, and my life is insured. I was prepared for anger, and I thought I saw, in a few obnoxious words, a hard case of repetition directed against me. I wished both magazine and review at the bottom of the sea. I shall be ashamed to see you, and my sister (though innocent) will be still more so ; for the folly was done without her knowledge, and has made her uneasy ever since. My guardian angel was absent at that time.

I will muster up courage to see you, however, any day next week (Wednesday excepted). We shall hope that you will bring Edith with you. That will be a second mortification. She will hate to see us ; but come and heap embers. We deserve it, I for what I've done, and she for being my sister.

Do come early in the day, by sunlight, that you may see my *Milton*.

I am at Colebrook Cottage, Colebrook Row, Islington. A detached whitish house, close to the New River, end of Colebrook Terrace, left hand from Sadler's Wells.

Will you let me know the day before?

Your penitent, C. LAMB

P. S. — I do not think your handwriting at all like Hunt's. I do not think many things I did think.

NOTE

[The following is Southey's letter which had "melted away the mist :"

My dear Lamb,— On Monday I saw your letter in the *London Magazine* which I had not before had an opportunity of seeing, and I now take the first interval of leisure for replying to it.

Nothing could be further from my mind than any intention or apprehension of any way offending or injuring a man concerning whom I have never spoken, thought, or felt otherwise than with affection, esteem, and admiration.

If you had let me know in any private or friendly manner that you felt wounded by a sentence in which nothing but kindness was intended — or that you found it might injure the sale of your book — I would most readily and gladly have inserted a note in the next Review to qualify and explain what had hurt you.

You have made this impossible, and I am sorry for it. But I will not engage in controversy with you to make sport for the Philistines.

The provocation must be strong indeed that can rouse me to do this, even with an enemy. And if you can forgive an unintended offence as heartily as I do the way in which you have resented it, there will be nothing to prevent our meeting as we have heretofore done, and feeling towards each other as we have always been wont to do.

Only signify a correspondent willingness on your part, and send me your address, and my first business next week shall be to reach your door, and shake hands with you and your sister. Remember me to her most kindly and believe me — Yours, with unabated esteem and regards,

ROBERT SOUTHEY

Thus the matter closed and no hostility remained on either side. — ED.]

CCCXCIV. — TO BERNARD BARTON

November 22, 1823.

Dear B. B., — I am ashamed at not acknowledging your kind little poem, which I must needs like much, but I protest I thought I had done it at the moment. Is it possible a letter has miscarried? Did you get one in which I sent you an extract from the poems of Lord Sterling? I should wonder if you did, for I sent you none such. There was an incipient *lye* strangled in the birth. Some people's conscience is so tender! But in plain truth I thank you very much for the verses. I have a very kind letter from the Laureat, with a self-invitation to come and shake hands with me. This is truly handsome and noble. 'T is worthy of my *old idea* of Southey. Shall not I, think you, be covered with a red suffusion?

You are too much apprehensive of your complaint. I know many that are always ailing of it, and live on to a good old age. I know a merry fellow (you partly know him) who when his medical adviser told him he had drunk away all *that part*, congratulated himself (now his liver was gone) that he should be the longest *liver* of the two. The best way in these cases is to keep yourself as ignorant as you can — as ignorant as the world was before Galen — of the entire inner construction of the animal man — not to be conscious of a midriff — to hold kidneys (save of sheep and swine) to be an agreeable fiction — not to know

whereabout the gall grows — to account the circulation of the blood an idle whimsey of Harvey's — to acknowledge no mechanism not visible. For, once fix the seat of your disorder, and your fancies flux into it like bad humours. Those medical gentries chuse each his favourite part — one takes the lungs — another the aforesaid liver — and refer to *that* whatever in the animal economy is amiss. Above all, use exercise, take a little more spirituous liquors, learn to smoke, continue to keep a good conscience, and avoid tampering with hard terms of art — viscosity, schirossity, and those bugbears, by which simple patients are scared into their grave. Believe the general sense of the mercantile world, which holds that desks are not deadly. It is the mind, good B. B., and not the limbs, that taints by long sitting. Think of the patience of taylors — think how long the Chancellor sits — think of the brooding hen.

I protest I cannot answer thy sister's kind enquiry, but I judge I shall put forth no second volume. More praise than buy, and T. and H. are not particularly disposed for martyrs.

Thou wilt see a funny passage, and yet a true History, of George Dyer's Aquatic Incursion, in the next *London*. Beware his fate, when thou comest to see me at my Colebrook Cottage. I have filled my little space with my little thoughts. I wish thee ease on thy sofa, but not too much indulgence on it. From my poor desk, thy fellow-sufferer this bright November, C. L.

CCCXCV.—TO W. H. AINSWORTH

December 9, 1823.

(If I had time I would go over this letter again, and dot all my *i*'s.)

Dear Sir,—I should have thanked you for your books and compliments sooner, but have been waiting for a revise to be sent, which does not come, tho' I returned the proof on the receipt of your letter. I have read *Warner* with great pleasure. What an elaborate piece of alliteration and antithesis! why it must have been a labour far above the most difficult versification. There is a fine simile of or picture of Semiramis arming to repel a siege. I do not mean to keep the book, for I suspect you are forming a curious collection, and I do not pretend to anything of the kind. I have not a black-letter book among mine, old Chaucer excepted, and am not bibliomanist enough to like black-letter. It is painful to read. Therefore I must insist on returning it at opportunity, not from contumacity and reluctance to be oblig'd, but because it must suit you better than me. The loss of a present *from* should never exceed the gain of a present *to*. I hold this maxim infallible in the accepting line. I read your magazines with satisfaction. I thoroughly agree with you as to the German *Faust*, as far [as] I can do justice to it from an English translation. 'T is a disagreeable canting tale of seduction, which has nothing to do with the spirit of Faustus—

curiosity. Was the dark secret to be explored to end in the seducing of a weak girl, which might have been accomplished by earthly agency? When Marlow gives *his* Faustus a mistress, he flies him at Helen, flower of Greece, to be sure, and not at Miss Betsy, or Miss Sally Thoughtless.

Cut is the branch that bore the goodly fruit,
And wither'd is Apollo's laurel tree:
Faustus is dead.

What a noble natural transition from metaphor to plain speaking! as if the figurative had flagged in description of such a loss, and was reduced to tell the fact simply.

I must now thank you for your very kind invitation. It is not out of prospect that I may see Manchester some day, and then I will avail myself of your kindness. But holydays are scarce things with me, and the laws of attendance are getting stronger and stronger at Leadenhall. But I shall bear it in mind. Meantime something may (more probably) bring you to town, where I shall be happy to see you. I am always to be found (alas!) at my desk in the forepart of the day.

I wonder why they do not send the revise. I leave late at office, and my abode lies out of the way, or I should have seen about it. If you are impatient, perhaps a line to the printer, directing him to send it me, at Accountant's Office, may answer. You will see by the scrawl that I only snatch a few minutes from intermitting business.

Your obliged servant, C. LAMB

CCCXCVI. — TO W. H. AINSWORTH

December 29, 1823.

My dear Sir, — You talk of months at a time and I know not what inducements to visit Manchester, heaven knows how gratifying! but I have had my little month of 1823 already. It is all over, and without incurring a disagreeable favour I cannot so much as get a single holyday till the season returns with the next year. Even our half-hour's absences from office are set down in a book! Next year, if I can spare a day or two of it, I will come to Manchester, but I have reasons at home against longer absences. I am so ill just at present (an illness of my own procuring last night; who is perfect?) that nothing but your very great kindness could make me write. I will bear in mind the letter to W. W., you shall have it quite in time, before the twelfth. My aking and confused head warns me to leave off. With a muddled sense of gratefulness, which I shall apprehend more clearly tomorrow, I remain, your friend unseen, C. L.

Will your occasions or inclination bring *you* to London? It will give me great pleasure to show you everything that Islington can boast, if you know the meaning of that very Cockney sound. We have the New River!

I am asham'd of this scrawl; but I beg you to accept it for the present. I am full of qualms.

A fool at fifty is a fool indeed.

CCCXCVII. — TO WILLIAM HONE

December, 1823.

Dear Sir, — Miss Hazlitt is anxious about her MS. novel. Would you be so kind as to transmit it some way or other to Mr. Hardy, 30 Queen's Row, or Queen's Square, Pimlico, if he has not already got it? I am afraid I have not duly acknowledged the present of your excellent pamphlet, for which much thanks and approbation, tho' late.

I remain, yours truly,

C. LAMB

CCCXCVIII. — TO BERNARD BARTON

January 9, 1824.

Dear B. B., — Do you know what it is to succumb under an insurmountable day-mare — a whoreson lethargy, Falstaff calls it — an indisposition to do anything, or to be anything — a total deadness and distaste — a suspension of vitality — an indifference to locality — a numb, soporifical good-for-nothingness — an ossification all over — an oyster-like insensibility to the passing events — a mind-stupor — a brawny defiance to the needles of a thrusting-in conscience — did you ever have a very bad cold, with a total irresolution to submit to water-gruel processes? — this has been for many weeks my lot and my excuse — my fingers drag heavily over this paper, and to my thinking it is three-and-twenty fur-

longs from here to the end of this demi-sheet — I have not a thing to say — nothing is of more importance than another — I am flatter than a denial or a pancake — emptier than Judge Park's wig when the head is in it — duller than a country stage when the actors are off it — a cypher — an 0 — I acknowledge life at all, only by an occasional convulsional cough, and a permanent phlegmatic pain in the chest — I am weary of the world, — Life is weary of me. My day is gone into twilight and I don't think it worth the expence of candles — my wick hath a thief in it, but I can't muster courage to snuff it — I inhale suffocation — I can't distinguish veal from mutton — nothing interests me — 't is twelve o'clock and Thurtell is just now coming out upon the New Drop — Jack Ketch alertly tucking up his greasy sleeves to do the last office of mortality, yet cannot I elicit a groan or a moral reflection — if you told me the world will be at end to-morrow, I should just say, "Will it?" — I have not volition enough to dot my *i*'s — much less to comb my *eyebrows* — my eyes are set in my head — my brains are gone out to see a poor relation in Moorfields, and they did not say when they'd come back again — my skull is a Grub street attic, to let — not so much as a joint-stool or a crack'd jordan left in it — my hand writes, not I, from habit, as chickens run about a little when their heads are off — O for a vigorous fit of gout, cholic, toothache — an ear-

wig in my auditory, a fly in my visual organs — pain is life — the sharper, the more evidence of life — but this apathy, this death — did you ever have an obstinate cold, a six or seven weeks' unintermitting chill and suspension of hope, fear, conscience, and everything — yet do I try all I can to cure it, I try wine and spirits and smoking and snuff in unsparing quantities, but they all only seem to make me worse, instead of better — I sleep in a damp room, but it does me no good; I come home late o' nights, but do not find any visible amendment.

Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

It is just fifteen minutes after twelve. Thurtell is by this time a good way on his journey, baiting at Scorpion perhaps; Ketch is bargaining for his cast coat and waistcoat, the Jew demurs at first at three half-crowns, but on consideration that he may get somewhat by showing 'em in the town, finally closes. C. L.

CCCXCIX. — TO BERNARD BARTON

January 23, 1824.

My dear Sir, — That peevish letter of mine, which was meant to convey an apology for my incapacity to write, seems to have been taken by you in too serious a light. It was only my way of telling you I had a severe cold. The fact is I have been insuperably dull and lethargic for

many weeks, and cannot rise to the vigour of a letter, much less an essay. The *London* must do without me for a time, a time, and half a time, for I have lost all interest about it, and whether I shall recover it again I know not. I will bridle my pen another time, and not tease and puzzle you with my aridities. I shall begin to feel a little more alive with the spring. Winter is to me (mild or harsh) always a great trial of the spirits. I am ashamed not to have noticed your tribute to Woolman, whom we love so much. It is done in your good manner.

Your friend Taylor called upon me some time since, and seems a very amiable man. His last story is painfully fine. His book I "like." It is only too stuff with scripture, too parsonish. The best thing in it is the boy's own story. When I say it is too full of Scripture, I mean it is too full of direct quotations; no book can have too much of *silent scripture* in it. But the natural power of a story is diminished when the uppermost purpose in the writer seems to be to recommend something else, viz., religion. You know what Horace says of the *Deus intersit*. I am not able to explain myself, you must do it for me.

My sister's part in the *Leicester School* (about two-thirds) was purely her own; as it was (to the same quantity) in the *Shakspeare Tales* which bear my name. I wrote only the *Witch Aunt*, the *First Going to Church*, and the final *Story about a little Indian girl in a Ship*.

Your account of my black-balling amused me. *I think, as Quakers, they did right.* There are some things hard to be understood.

The more I think the more I am vexed at having puzzled you with that letter, but I have been so out of letter-writing of late years, that it is a sore effort to sit down to it, and I felt in your debt, and sat down waywardly to pay you in bad money. Never mind my dulness; I am used to long intervals of it. The heavens seem brass to me; then again comes the refreshing shower. "I have been merry once or twice ere now."

You said something about Mr. Mitford in a late letter, which I believe I did not advert to. I shall be happy to show him my *Milton* (it is all the show things I have) at any time he will take the trouble of a jaunt to Islington. I do also hope to see Mr. Taylor there some day. Pray say so to both.

Coleridge's book is good part printed, but sticks a little for *more copy*. It bears an unsaleable title — *Extracts from Bishop Leighton* — but I am confident there will be plenty of good notes in it, more of Bishop Coleridge than Leighton, I hope; for what is Leighton?

Do you trouble yourself about libel cases? The decision against Hunt for the *Vision of Judgment* made me sick. What is to become of the old talk about *our good old King* — his personal virtues saving us from a revolution, &c., &c. Why, none that think it can utter it now. It must stink. And the

Vision is really, as to him-ward, such a tolerant good humour'd thing. What a wretched thing a Lord Chief Justice is, always was, and will be!

Keep your good spirits up, dear B. B.; mine will return; they are at present in abeyance. But I am rather lethargic than miserable. I don't know but a good horsewhip would be more beneficial to me than physic. My head, without aching, will teach yours to ache. It is well I am getting to the conclusion. I will send a better letter when I am a better man. Let me thank you for your kind concern for me (which I trust will have reason soon to be dissipated) and assure you that it gives me pleasure to hear from you.

Yours truly, C. L.

CCCC.— TO CHARLES OLLIER

January 27, 1824.

Dear Ollier, — Many thanks from both of us for *Inesilla*. I wished myself younger, that I might have more enjoyed the terror of that desolate city, and the damned palace. I think it is as fine as anything in its way, and wish you joy of success, &c.

With better weather, I shall hope to see you at Islington.

Meantime, believe me, yours truly,

C. LAMB

Scribbled 'midst official flurry.

CCCCI.—TO BERNARD BARTON

February 25, 1824.

My dear Sir,—Your title of *Poetic Vigils* arrides me much more than *A Volume of Verse*, which is no meaning. The motto says nothing, but I cannot suggest a better. I do not like mottoes but where they are singularly felicitous; there is foppery in them. They are unplain, un-Quakerish. They are good only where they flow from the title and are a kind of justification of it. There is nothing about watchings or lucubrations in the one you suggest, no commentary on vigils. By the way, a wag would recommend you to the line of Pope, —

Sleepless himself—to give his readers sleep.

I by no means wish it. But it may explain what I mean, that a neat motto is child of the title. I think *Poetic Vigils* as short and sweet as can be desired; only have an eye on the proof, that the printer do not substitute *Virgils*, which would ill accord with your modesty or meaning. Your suggested motto is antique enough in spelling, and modern enough in phrases; a good modern antique: but the matter of it is germane to the purpose only supposing the title proposed a vindication of yourself from the presumption of authorship. The first title was liable to this objection, that if you were disposed to enlarge it, and the bookseller insisted on its appearance in two tomes, how oddly it would sound, —

A Volume of Verse
In Two Volumes
Second Edition, &c.

You see thro' my wicked intention of curtailing this epistolet by the above device of large margin. But in truth the idea of letterising has been oppressive to me of late above your candour to give me credit for. There is Southey, whom I ought to have thank'd a fortnight ago for a present of the *Cburch Book*. I have never had courage to buckle myself in earnest even to acknowledge it by six words. And yet I am accounted by some people a good man. How cheap that character is acquired! Pay your debts, don't borrow money, nor twist your kitten's neck off, or disturb a congregation, &c., your business is done. I know things (thoughts or things, thoughts are things) of myself which would make every friend I have fly me as a plague patient. I once * * * , and set a dog upon a crab's leg that was shoved out under a moss of sea weeds, a pretty little feeler. Oh! pah! how sick I am of that; and a lie, a mean one, I once told!

I stink in the midst of respect.

I am much hypt; the fact is, my head is heavy, but there is hope, or if not, I am better than a poor shell-fish — not morally when I set the whelp upon it, but have more blood and spirits; things may turn up, and I may creep again into a decent opinion of myself. Vanity

will return with sunshine. Till when, pardon my neglects and impute it to the wintry solstice.

C. LAMB

CCCCII. — TO BERNARD BARTON

March 24, 1824.

Dear B. B.,—I hasten to say that if my opinion can strengthen you in your choice, it is decisive for your acceptance of what has been so handsomely offered. I can see nothing injurious to your most honourable sense. Think that you are called to a poetical ministry — nothing worse — the minister is worthy of the hire.

The only objection I feel is founded on a fear that the acceptance may be a temptation to you to let fall the bone (hard as it is) which is in your mouth and must afford tolerable pickings, for the shadow of independence. You cannot propose to become independent on what the low state of interest could afford you from such a principal as you mention; and the most graceful excuse for the acceptance would be that it left you free to your voluntary functions. That is the less *light* part of the scruple. It has no darker shade. I put in *darker*, because of the ambiguity of the word *light*, which Donne in his admirable poem on the *Metempsychosis*, has so ingeniously illustrated in his invocation, —

Make my ¹*dark* ²*heavy* poem, ¹*light* and ²*light*,

where the two senses of *light* are opposed to different opposites. A trifling criticism. I can see no reason for any scruple, then, but what arises from your own interest; which is in your own power of course to solve. If you still have doubts, read over Sanderson's *Cases of Conscience*, and Jeremy Taylor's *Ductor Dubitantium*, the first a moderate octavo, the latter a folio of nine hundred close pages, and when you have thoroughly digested the admirable reasons *pro* and *con* which they give for every possible case, you will be—just as wise as when you began. Every man is his own best casuist; and after all, as Ephraim Smooth, in the pleasant comedy of *Wild Oats*, has it, “there is no harm in a guinea.” *A fortiori* there is less in two thousand.

I therefore most sincerely congratulate with you, excepting so far as excepted above. If you have fair prospects of adding to the principal, cut the bank; but in either case do not refuse an honest service. Your heart tells you it is not offered to bribe you *from* any duty, but *to* a duty which you feel to be your vocation. Farewell heartily,

C. L.

CCCCIII.—TO BERNARD BARTON

Early Spring, 1824.

I am sure I cannot fill a letter, though I should disfurnish my skull to fill it. But you expect something, and shall have a notelet. Is Sunday,

not divinely speaking, but humanly and holyday-sically, a blessing? Without its institution, would our rugged taskmasters have given us a leisure day, so often, think you, as once in a month? or, if it had not been instituted, might they not have given us every sixth day? Solve me this problem. If we are to go three times a day to church, why has Sunday slipped into the notion of a *Holiday*? A Holyday I grant it. The Puritans, I have read in Southey's *Book [of the Church]*, knew the distinction. They made people observe Sunday rigorously, would not let a nursery-maid walk out in the fields with children for recreation on that day. But *then* — they gave the people a holiday from all sorts of work every second Tuesday. This was giving to the Two Cæsars that which was *his* respective. Wise, beautiful, thoughtful, generous legislators! Would Wilberforce give us our Tuesdays? No, d—n him. He would turn the six days into sevenths, —

And those three smiling seasons of the year
Into a Russian winter. *Old Play.*

I am sitting opposite a person who is making strange distortions with the gout, which is not unpleasant — to me at least. What is the reason we do not sympathise with pain, short of some terrible surgical operation? Hazlitt, who boldly says all he feels, avows that not only he does not pity sick people, but he hates them. I obscurely recognise his meaning. Pain is probably too selfish a consideration, too simply a consideration

of self-attention. We pity poverty, loss of friends, &c., more complex things, in which the sufferer's feelings are associated with others. This is a rough thought suggested by the presence of gout; I want head to extricate it and plane it.

What is all this to your letter? I felt it to be a good one, but my turn, when I write at all, is perversely to travel out of the record, so that my letters are anything but answers. So you still want a motto? You must not take my ironical one, because your book, I take it, is too serious for it. Bickerstaff might have used it for *his* lucubrations. What do you think of (for a Title), —

Religio Tremuli
or Tremebundi

There is *Religio-Medici* and *Laici*. But perhaps the volume is not quite Quakerish enough or exclusively for it; but your own *Vigils* is perhaps the best. While I have space, let me congratulate with you the return of spring; what a summery spring too! all those qualms about the dog and cray-fish melt before it. I am going to be happy and *vain* again.

A hasty farewell,

C. LAMB

CCCCIV. — TO MRS. THOMAS ALLSOP

April 13, 1824.

Dear Mrs. A., — Mary begs me to say how much she regrets we cannot join you to Reigate. Our reasons are — 1st, I have but one holyday,

namely Good Friday, and it is not pleasant to solicit for another, but that might have been got over. 2dly, Manning is with us, soon to go away and we should not be easy in leaving him. 3dly, our school girl Emma comes to us for a few days on Thursday. 4thly and lastly, Wordsworth is returning home in about a week, and out of respect to them we should not like to absent ourselves just now. In summer I shall have a month, and if it shall suit, should like to go for a few days of it out with you both *anywhere*. In the meantime, with many acknowledgments, &c., &c., I remain yours (both) truly,

C. LAMB

Remember Sundays.

CCCCV.—TO WILLIAM HONE

April, 1824.

Dear Sir,— Miss Hazlitt (niece to *Pygmalion*) begs us to send to you *for Mr. Hardy* a parcel. I have not thank'd you for your pamphlet, but I assure you I approve of it in all parts, only that I would have seen my calumniators at hell, before I would have told them I was a Christian, *tho' I am one*, I think as much as you. I hope to see you here, some day soon. The parcel is a novel which I hope Mr. H. may sell for her. I am with greatest friendliness, yours,

C. LAMB

CCCCVI. — TO THOMAS HARDY

April 24, 1824.

Dear Sir, — Miss Hazlitt has begged me to say to you that the novel, which you kindly promised to introduce to Mr. Ridgway, is lying for that purpose at Mr. Hone's, Ludgate Street, where you will perhaps be so kind as to send for it. She is going on 10th May as governess into the family of Mrs. Brookes, Dawlish, where she shall be thankful to receive any communications respecting the novel. She is now at 14 Queen's Square, Bristol.

I am, Sir, with great respect,

Yours, &c.,

CH. LAMB

CCCCVII. — TO BERNARD BARTON

May 15, 1824.

Dear B. B., — I am oppressed with business all day, and company all night. But I will snatch a quarter of an hour. Your recent acquisitions of the picture and the letter are greatly to be congratulated. I too have a picture of my father and the copy of his first love verses; but they have been mine long. Blake is a real name, I assure you, and a most extraordinary man, if he be still living. He is the Robert [William] Blake, whose wild designs accompany a splendid folio edition of the *Night Thoughts*, which you may have seen, in one of which he pictures the parting

of soul and body by a solid mass of human form floating off, God knows how, from a lumpish mass (facsimile to itself) left behind on the dying bed. He paints in water colours marvellous strange pictures, visions of his brain, which he asserts that he has seen. They have great merit. He has *seen* the old Welsh bards on Snowdon — he has seen the beautifullest, the strongest and the ugliest man, left alone from the massacre of the Britons by the Romans, and has painted them from memory (I have seen his paintings), and asserts them to be as good as the figures of Raphael and Angelo, but not better, as they had precisely the same retro-visions and prophetic visions with himself. The painters in oil (which he will have it that neither of them practised) he affirms to have been the ruin of art, and affirms that all the while he was engaged in his water paintings, Titian was disturbing him, Titian the ill genius of oil painting. His pictures, one in particular, the Canterbury Pilgrims (far above Stothard's), have great merit, but hard, dry, yet with grace. He has written a catalogue of them with a most spirited criticism on Chaucer, but mystical and full of vision. His poems have been sold hitherto only in manuscript. I never read them; but a friend at my desire procured the *Sweep Song*. There is one to a tiger, which I have heard recited, beginning,—

Tiger, tiger, burning bright,
Thro' the desarts of the night,

which is glorious, but, alas! I have not the book; for the man is flown, whither I know not — to Hades or a madhouse. But I must look on him as one of the most extraordinary persons of the age. Montgomery's book I have not much hope from. The Society with the affected name, has been labouring at it for these twenty years, and made few converts. I think it was injudicious to mix stories avowedly colour'd by fiction with the sad true statements from the parliamentary records, &c., but I wish the little negroes all the good that can come from it. I batter'd my brains (not butter'd them — but it is a bad *a*) for a few verses for them, but I could make nothing of it. You have been luckier. But Blake's are the flower of the set, you will, I am sure, agree, tho' some of Montgomery's at the end are pretty; but the Dream awkwardly paraphras'd from B.

With the exception of an epilogue for a private theatrical, I have written nothing now for near six months. It is in vain to spur me on. I must wait. I cannot write without a genial impulse, and I have none. 'Tis barren all and dearth. No matter; life is something without scribbling. I have got rid of my bad spirits, and hold up pretty well this rain-damn'd May.

So we have lost another poet. I never much relished his Lordship's mind, and shall be sorry if the Greeks have cause to miss him. He was to me offensive, and I never can make out his great *power*, which his admirers talk of. Why, a line

of Wordsworth's is a lever to lift the immortal spirit! Byron can only move the spleen. He was at best a satyrist,—in any other way he was mean enough. I dare say I do him injustice; but I cannot love him, nor squeeze a tear to his memory. He did not like the world, and he has left it, as Alderman Curtis advised the Radicals, "If they don't like their country, damn 'em, let 'em leave it;" they possessing no rood of ground in England, and he 10,000 acres. Byron was better than many Curtises.

Farewell, and accept this apology for a letter from one who owes you so much in that kind.

Yours ever truly,

C. L.

CCCCVIII.—TO BERNARD BARTON

July 7, 1824.

Dear B. B.,—I have been suffering under a severe inflammation of the eyes, notwithstanding which I resolutely went through your very pretty volume at once, which I dare pronounce in no ways inferior to former lucubrations. "*Abroad*" and "*lord*" are vile rhymes notwithstanding, and if you count you will wonder how many times you have repeated the word *unearthly*; thrice in one poem. It is become a slang word with the bards; avoid it in future lustily. "Time" is fine; but there are better a good deal, I think. The volume does not lie by me; and, after a long day's smarting fatigue, which has almost put out

my eyes (not blind, however, to your merits); I dare not trust myself with long writing. The verses to Bloomfield are the sweetest in the collection. Religion is sometimes lugged in, as if it did not come naturally. I will go over carefully when I get my seeing, and exemplify. You have also too much of singing metre, such as requires no deep ear to make; lilting measure, in which you have done Woolman injustice. Strike at less superficial melodies. The piece on Nayler is more to my fancy.

My eye runs waters. But I will give you a fuller account some day. The book is a very pretty one in more than one sense. The decorative harp, perhaps, too ostentatious; a simple pipe preferable.

Farewell, and many thanks. C. LAMB

CCCCIX.—TO W. MARTER

July 19, 1824.

Dear Marter, — I have just received your letter, having returned from a month's holydays. My exertions for the *London* are, tho' not dead, in a deep sleep for the present. If your club like scandal, *Blackwood's* is your magazine; if you prefer light articles, and humorous without offence, the *New Monthly* is very amusing. The best of it is by Horace Smith, the author of the *Rejected Addresses*. The *Old Monthly* has more of matter, information, but not so merry. I cannot safely

recommend any others, as not knowing them, or knowing them to their disadvantage. Of Reviews, beside what you mention, I know of none except the Review on Hounslow Heath, which I take it is too expensive for your ordering. Pity me, that have been a gentleman these four weeks, and am reduced in one day to the state of a ready writer. I feel, I feel, my gentlemanly qualities fast oozing away — such as a sense of honour, neckcloths twice a day, abstinence from swearing, &c. The desk enters into my soul.

See my thoughts on business next page. [*Lamb's lines appear in letter of September 11, 1822, to Bernard Barton.*]

With many recollections of pleasanter times, my old compeer, happily released before me, adieu.

C. LAMB

CCCCX. — TO JOHN BATES DIBDIN

July 28, 1824.

My dear Sir, — I must appear negligent in not having thanked you for the very pleasant books you sent me. *Arthur*, and the *Novel*, we have both of us read with unmixed satisfaction. They are full of quaint conceits, and running over with good humour and good nature. I naturally take little interest in story, but in these the manner and not the end is the interest; it is such pleasant travelling, one scarce cares whither it leads

us. Pray express our pleasure to your father with my best thanks.

I am involved in a routine of visiting among the family of Barron Field, just returned from Botany Bay. I shall hardly have an open evening before *Tuesday* next. Will you come to us then? Yours truly, C. LAMB

CCCCXI.—TO THOMAS HOOD

August 10, 1824.

And what dost thou at the Priory? *Cucullus non facit Monachum*. English me that, and challenge old *Lignum Janua* to make a better.

My old New River has presented no extraordinary novelties lately; but there Hope sits every day, speculating upon traditionary gudgeons. I think she has taken the fisheries. I now know the reason why our forefathers were denominated East and West Angles. Yet is there no lack of spawn; for I wash my hands in fishets that come through the pump every morning thick as motelings,—little things o o o like *that*, that perish untimely, and never taste the brook. You do not tell me of those romantic land bays that be as thou goest to Lover's Seat: neither of that little churchling in the midst of a wood (in the opposite direction, nine furlongs from the town), that seems dropped by the angel that was tired of carrying two packages; marry, with the other he made shift to pick his flight to Loretto. Inquire out,

and see my little Protestant Loretto. It stands apart from trace of human habitation ; yet hath it pulpit, reading-desk, and trim font of massiest marble, as if Robinson Crusoe had reared it to soothe himself with old church-going images. I forget its Christian name, and what she-saint was its gossip.

You should also go to No. 13 Standgate Street, — a baker, who has the finest collection of marine monsters in ten sea counties, — sea dragons, polypi, mer-people, most fantastic. You have only to name the old gentleman in black (not the Devil) that lodged with him a week (he'll remember) last July, and he will show courtesy. He is by far the foremost of the *savans*. His wife is the funniest thwarting little animal ! They are decidedly the lions of green Hastings. Well, I have made an end of my say. My epistolary time is gone by when I could have scribbled as long (I will not say as agreeable) as thine was to both of us. I am dwindled to notes and letterets. But, in good earnest, I shall be most happy to hail thy return to the waters of Old Sir Hugh. There is nothing like inland murmurs, fresh ripples, and our native minnows.

He sang in meads how sweet the brooklets ran,
To the rough ocean and red restless sands.

I design to give up smoking ; but I have not yet fixed upon the equivalent vice. I must have *quid pro quo* ; or *quo pro quid*, as Tom Woodgate would correct me. My service to him. C. L.

CCCCXII. — TO BERNARD BARTON

August 17, 1824.

Dear B. B., — I congratulate you on getting a house over your head. I find the comfort of it I am sure. At my town lodgings the mistress was always quarrelling with our maid; and at my place of rustication, the whole family were always beating one another, brothers beating sisters (one a most beautiful girl lamed for life), father beating sons and daughters, and son again beating his father, knocking him fairly down, a scene I never before witnessed, but was called out of bed by the unnatural blows, the parricidal colour of which, tho' my morals could not but condemn, yet my reason did heartily approve, and in the issue the house was quieter for a day or so than I had ever known. I am now all harmony and quiet, even to the sometimes wishing back again some of the old ruffings. There is something stirring in these civil broils.

The album shall be attended to. If I can light upon a few appropriate rhymes (but rhymes come with difficulty from me now) I shall beg a place in the neat margin of your young house-keeper.

The *Prometheus Unbound* is a capital story. The literal rogue! What if you had ordered *Elfrida* in *sheets*! She'd have been sent up, I warrant you. Or bid him clasp his bible (*i. e.* to his bosom) — he'd have clapt on a brass clasp, no doubt. I can

no more understand Shelley than you can. His poetry is "thin sown with profit or delight." Yet I must point to your notice a sonnet conceiv'd and expressed with a witty delicacy. It is that addressed to one who hated him, but who could not persuade him to hate *him* again. His coyness to the other's passion (for hate demands a return as much as love, and starves without it) is most arch and pleasant. Pray, like it very much.

For his theories and nostrums they are oracular enough, but I either comprehend 'em not, or there is miching malice and mischief in 'em. But for the most part ringing with their own emptiness. Hazlitt said well of 'em — Many are wiser and better for reading Shakspeare, but nobody was ever wiser or better for reading Sh—y.

I wonder you will sow your correspondence on so barren a ground as I am, that make such poor returns. But my head akes at the bare thought of letter writing. I wish all the ink in the ocean dried up, and would listen to the quills shrivelling up in the candle flame, like parching martyrs. The same indisposition to write it has stopt my *Elias*, but you will see a futile effort in the next Number, "wrung from me with slow pain."

The fact is, my head is seldom cool enough. I am dreadfully indolent. To have to do anything — to order me a new coat, for instance, tho' my old buttons are shelled like beans — is an effort.

My pen stammers like my tongue. What cool
craniums those old enditers of folios must have
had. What a mortify'd pulse. Well, once more
I throw myself on your mercy — Wishing peace
in thy new dwelling,

C. LAMB

NOTE

[Shelley's poem which Lamb refers to :

LINES TO A REVIEWER

Alas ! good friend, what profit can you see
In hating such an hateless thing as me ?
There is no sport in hate, where all the rage
Is on one side. In vain would you assuage
Your frowns upon an unresisting smile,
In which not even contempt lurks, to beguile
Your heart by some faint sympathy of hate.
Oh conquer what you cannot satiate !
For to your passion I am far more coy
Than ever yet was coldest maid or boy
In winter-noon. Of your antipathy
If I am the Narcissus, you are free
To pine into a sound with hating me.]

CCCCXIII. — TO THE REV. H. F. CARY

August 19, 1824.

Dear Sir,— I shall have much pleasure in dining
with you on Wednesday next, with much shame
that I have not noticed your kind present of the
Birds, which I found very chirping and whimsi-
cal. I believe at the time I was daily thinking
of paying you a visit, and put it off — till I should
come. Somehow it slipt, and [I] must crave
your pardon. Yours truly,

C. LAMB

CCCCXIV.— TO BERNARD BARTON

Little Book ! surnam'd of *white* ;
Clean, as yet, and fair to sight ;
Keep thy attribution right.

Never disproportion'd scrawl ;
Ugly blot, that 's worse than all ;
On thy maiden clearness fall.

In each letter, here design'd,
Let the reader emblem'd find
Neatness of the owner's mind.

Gilded margins count a sin ;
Let thy leaves attraction win
By the golden rules within :

Sayings, fetch'd from sages old ;
Saws, which Holy Writ unfold,
Worthy to be writ in Gold :

Lighter fancies not excluding ;
Blameless wit, with nothing rude in,
Sometimes mildly interluding

Amid strains of graver measure ; —
Virtue's self hath oft her pleasure
In sweet Muses' groves of leisure.

Riddles dark, perplexing sense ;
Darker meanings of offence ;
What but *shades*, be banish'd hence.

Whitest thoughts, in whitest dress —
Candid meanings — best express
Mind of quiet Quakeress.

Dear B. B.,—“ I am ill at these numbers ; ”
but if the above be not too mean to have a place

in thy daughter's sanctum, take them with pleasure. I assume that her name is Hannah, because it is a pretty scriptural cognomen. I began on another sheet of paper, and just as I had penn'd the second line of stanza two an ugly blot [*here is a blot*] as big as this, fell, to illustrate my counsel. I am sadly given to blot, and modern blotting-paper gives no redress; it only smears and makes it worse, as for example [*here is a smear*]. The only remedy is scratching out, which gives it a clerkish look. The most innocent blots are made with red ink, and are rather ornamental. [*Here are two or three blots in red ink.*] Marry, they are not always to be distinguished from the effusions of a cut finger.

Well, I hope and trust thy tick doleru, or however you spell it, is vanished, for I have frightful impressions of that tick, and do altogether hate it, as an unpaid score, or the tick of a death-watch. I take it to be a species of Vitus's dance (I omit the sanctity, writing to "one of the men called Friends"). I knew a young lady who could dance no other, she danced thro' life, and very queer and fantastic were her steps. Heaven bless thee from such measures, and keep thee from the foul fiend, who delights to lead after false fires in the night, Flibbertigibit, that gives the web and the pin, &c., I forget what else.

From my den, as Bunyan has it, 30 Sep. '24.

C. L.

CCCCXV.—TO MRS. JOHN D. COLLIER

November 2, 1824.

Dear Mrs. Collier, — We receive so much pig from your kindness, that I really have not phrase enough to vary successive acknowledgements.

I think I shall get a printed form to serve on all occasions.

To say it was young, crisp, short, luscious, dainty-toed, is but to say what all its predecessors have been. It was eaten on Sunday and Monday, and doubts only exist as to which temperature it eat best, hot or cold. I incline to the latter. The petty-feet made a pretty surprising præ-gustation for supper on Saturday night, just as I was loathingly in expectation of bren-cheese. I spell as I speak.

I do not know what news to send you. You will have heard of Alsager's death, and your son John's success in the lottery. I say he is a wise man, if he leaves off while he is well. The weather is wet to weariness, but Mary goes puddling about a-shopping after a gown for the winter. She wants it good, and cheap. Now I hold that no good things are cheap, pig-presents always excepted. In this mournful weather I sit moping, where I now write, in an office dark as Erebus, jammed in between four walls, and writing by candle-light, most melancholy. Never see the light of the sun six hours in the day, and am

surprised to find how pretty it shines on Sundays. I wish I were a caravan driver or a penny postman, to earn my bread in air and sunshine. Such a pedestrian as I am, to be tied by the legs, like a Fauntleroy, without the pleasure of his exactions. I am interrupted here with an official question, which will take me up till it's time to go to dinner, so with repeated thanks and both our kindest remembrances to Mr. Collier and yourself, I conclude in haste.

Yours and his sincerely, C. LAMB

On further enquiry Alsager is not dead; but Mrs. A. is brought to bed.

NOTE

[Henry Fauntleroy was the banker, who had just been found guilty of forgery and on the day that Lamb wrote was sentenced to death. — E. V. LUCAS.]

CCCCXVI. — TO B. W. PROCTER

November 11, 1824.

My dear Procter, — I do agnise a shame in not having been to pay my congratulations to Mrs. Procter and your happy self, but on Sunday (my only morning) I was engaged to a country walk; and in virtue of the hypostatical union between us, when Mary calls, it is understood that I call too, we being univocal.

But indeed I am ill at these ceremonious

inductions. I fancy I was not born with a call on my head, though I have brought one down upon it with a vengeance. I love not to pluck that sort of fruit crude, but to stay its ripening into visits. In probability Mary will be at Southampton Row this morning, and something of that kind be matured between you, but in any case not many hours shall elapse before I shake you by the hand.

Meantime give my kindest felicitations to Mrs. Procter, and assure her I look forward with the greatest delight to our acquaintance. By the way, the deuce a bit of cake has come to hand, which hath an inauspicious look at first, but I comfort myself that that mysterious service hath the property of sacramental bread, which mice cannot nibble nor time moulder.

I am married myself to a severe step-wife, who keeps me, not at bed and board, but at desk and board, and is jealous of my morning aberrations. I cannot slip out to congratulate kinder unions. It is well she leaves me alone o' nights — the damn'd day-hag *Business*. She is even now peeping over me to see I am writing no love-letters. I come, my dear — Where is the Indigo sale-book?

Twenty adieus, my dear friends, till we meet.

Yours most truly, C. LAMB

CCCCXVII.— TO H. C. ROBINSON

November 20, 1824.

Dear R.,— Barron Field bids me say that he is resident at his brother Henry's, a surgeon, &c., a few doors west of Christ Church Passage, Newgate Street; and that he shall be happy to accompany you up thence to Islington, when next you come our way, but not so late as you sometimes come. I think we shall be out on Tuesday.

Yours ever,

C. LAMB

CCCCXVIII.— TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

November 25, 1824.

My dear Miss Hutchinson,— Mary bids me thank you for your kind letter. We are a little puzzled about your whereabouts: Miss Wordsworth writes Torkay, and you have queerly made it Torquay. Now Tokay we have heard of, and Torbay, which we take to be the true *male* spelling of the place, but somewhere we fancy it to be on "Devon's leafy shores," where we heartily wish the kindly breezes may restore all that is invalid among you. Robinson is returned, and speaks much of you all. We shall be most glad to hear good news from you from time to time. The best is, Proctor is at last married. We have made sundry attempts to see the bride, but have accidentally failed, she being gone out a-gadding.

We had promised our dear friends the Monk-houses, promised ourselves rather, a visit to them at Ramsgate, but I thought it best, and Mary seemed to have it at heart too, not to go far from home these last holydays. It is connected with a sense of unsettlement, and secretly I know she hoped that such abstinence would be friendly to her health. She certainly has escaped her sad yearly visitation, whether in consequence of it, or of faith in it, and we have to be thankful for a good 1824. To get such a notion into our heads may go a great way another year. Not that we quite confined ourselves; but assuming Islington to be headquarters, we made timid flights to Ware, Watford, &c., to try how the trouts tasted, for a night out or so, not long enough to make the sense of change oppressive, but sufficient to scour the rust of home.

Coleridge is not returned from the sea. As a little scandal may divert you recluses; we were in the summer dining at a clergyman of Southey's "Church of England," at Hertford, the same who officiated to Thurtell's last moments, and indeed an old contemporary Blue of C.'s and mine at school. After dinner we talked of C., and F., who is a mighty good fellow in the main, but hath his cassock prejudices, inveighed against the moral character of C. I endeavoured to enlighten him on the subject, till having driven him out of some of his holds, he stopt my mouth at once by appealing to me whether it was not very well

known that C. “at that very moment was living in a state of open adultery with Mrs. * * * * * [Gillman] at Highgate?” Nothing I could say serious or bantering after that could remove the deep inrooted conviction of the whole company assembled that such was the case! Of course you will keep this quite close, for I would not involve my poor blundering friend, who I dare say believed it all thoroughly. My interference of course was imputed to the goodness of my heart, that could imagine nothing wrong, &c. Such it is if ladies will go gadding about with other people’s husbands at watering-places.

How careful we should be to avoid the appearance of evil! I thought this anecdote might amuse you. It is not worth resenting seriously; only I give it as a specimen of orthodox candour. O Southey, Southey, how long would it be before you would find one of us *Unitarians* propagating such unwarrantable scandal! Providence keep you all from the foul fiend scandal, and send you back well and happy to dear Gloster Place!

C. L.

CCCCXIX. — TO LEIGH HUNT

November, 1824.

Illustrezzimo Signor, — I have obeyed your mandate to a tittle. I accompany this with a volume. But what have you done with the first I sent you? — have you swapt it with some lazzaroni

for macaroni? or pledged it with a gondolierer for a passage? Peradventuri the Cardinal Gonsalvi took a fancy to it: — his Eminence has done my Nearness an honour. 'Tis but a step to the Vatican. As you judge, my works do not enrich the workman, but I get vat I can for 'em. They keep dragging me on, a poor, worn mill-horse, in the eternal round of the damn'd magazine; but 'tis they are blind, not I. Colburn (where I recognise with delight the gay W. Honeycomb renovated) hath the ascendancy.

I was with the Novellos last week. They have a large, cheap house and garden, with a dainty library (magnificent) without books. But what will make you bless yourself (I am too old for wonder), something has touched the right organ in Vincentio at last. He attends a Wesleyan chapel on Kingsland Green. He at first tried to laugh it off — he only went for the singing; but the cloven foot — I retract — the Lamb's trotters — are at length apparent. Mary Isabella attributes it to a lightness induced by his headaches. But I think I see in it a less accidental influence. Mister Clark is at perfect staggers! the whole fabric of his infidelity is shaken. He has no one to join him in his coarse insults and indecent obstreperousnesses against Christianity, for Holmes (the bonny Holmes) is gone to Salisbury to be organist, and Isabella and the Clark make but a feeble quorum. The children have all nice, neat little clasped pray-books, and I

have laid out 7s. 8d. in *Watts's Hymns* for Christmas presents for them. The eldest girl alone holds out; she has been at Boulogne, skirting upon the vast focus of atheism, and imported bad principles in patois French. But the strongholds are crumbling. N. appears as yet to have but a confused notion of the atonement. It makes him giddy, he says, to think much about it. But such giddiness is spiritual sobriety.

Well, Byron is gone, and —— is now the best poet in England. Fill up the gap to your fancy. Barry Cornwall has at last carried the pretty A. S. They are just in the treacle-moon. Hope it won't clog his wings — gaum we used to say at school.

Mary, my sister, has worn me out with eight weeks' cold and toothache, her average complement in the winter, and it will not go away. She is otherwise well, and reads novels all day long. She has had an exempt year, a good year, for which, forgetting the minor calamity, she and I are most thankful.

Alsager is in a flourishing house, with wife and children about him, in Mecklenburg Square — almost too fine to visit.

Barron Field is come home from Sydney, but as yet I can hear no tidings of a pension. He is plump and friendly, his wife really a very superior woman. He resumes the bar.

I have got acquainted with Mr. Irving, the Scotch preacher, whose fame must have reached you. He is a humble disciple at the foot of

Gamaliel S. T. C. Judge how his own sectarists must stare when I tell you he has dedicated a book to S. T. C., acknowledging to have learnt more of the nature of faith, Christianity, and Christian Church, from him than from all the men he ever conversed with. He is a most amiable, sincere, modest man in a room, this Boanerges in the temple. Mrs. Montague told him the dedication would do him no good. "That shall be a reason for doing it," was his answer. Judge, now, whether this man be a quack.

Dear H., take this imperfect notelet for a letter; it looks so much the more like conversing on nearer terms. Love to all the Hunts, old friend Thornton, and all. Yours ever,

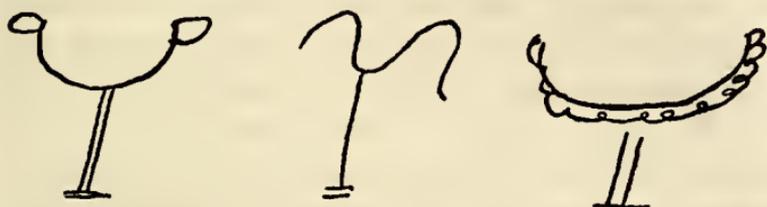
C. LAMB

CCCCXX. — TO BERNARD BARTON

December 1, 1824.

Dear B. B., — If Mr. Mitford will send me a full and circumstantial description of his desired vases, I will transmit the same to a gentleman resident at Canton, whom I think I have interest enough in to take the proper care for their execution. But Mr. M. must have patience. China is a great way off, further perhaps than he thinks; and his next year's roses must be content to wither in a Wedgewood pot. He will please to say whether he should like his arms upon them,

&c. I send herewith some patterns which suggest themselves to me at the first blush of the subject, but he will probably consult his own taste after all.



The last pattern is obviously fitted for ranunculuses only. The two former may indifferently hold daisies, marjoram, sweet-williams, and that sort. My friend in Canton is inspector of teas, his name Ball; and I can think of no better tunnel. I shall expect Mr. M.'s decision.

Taylor and Hessey finding their magazine goes off very heavily at 2s. 6d. are prudently going to raise their price another shilling; and having already more authors than they want, intend to increase the number of them. If they set up against the *New Monthly*, they must change their present hands. It is not tying the dead carcass of a Review to a half-dead Magazine will do their business. It is like G. D. multiplying his volumes to make 'em sell better. When he finds one will not go off, he publishes two; two stick, he tries three; three hang fire, he is confident that four will have a better chance.

And now, my dear Sir, trifling apart, the gloomy catastrophe of yesterday morning prompts

a sadder vein. The fate of the unfortunate Fauntleroy makes me, whether I will or no, to cast reflecting eyes around on such of my friends as by a parity of situation are exposed to a similarity of temptation. My very style seems to myself to become more impressive than usual with the change of theme. Who that standeth knoweth but he may yet fall? Your hands as yet, I am most willing to believe, have never deviated into others' property. You think it impossible that you could ever commit so heinous an offence. But so thought Fauntleroy once; so have thought many besides him, who at last have expiated, as he hath done. You are as yet upright. But you are a banker, at least the next thing to it. I feel the delicacy of the subject; but cash must pass thro' your hands, sometimes to a great amount. If in an unguarded hour —— but I will hope better. Consider the scandal it will bring upon those of your persuasion. Thousands would go to see a Quaker hanged, that would be indifferent to the fate of a Presbyterian or an Anabaptist. Think of the effect it would have on the sale of your poems alone; not to mention higher considerations. I tremble, I am sure, at myself, when I think that so many poor victims of the law at one time of their life made as sure of never being hanged as I in my presumption am too ready to do myself. What are we better than they? Do we come into the world with different necks? Is there any distinctive mark under our

left ears? Are we unstragulable? I ask you. Think of these things. I am shocked sometimes at the shape of my own fingers, not for their resemblance to the ape tribe (which is something) but for the exquisite adaptation of them to the purposes of picking, fingering, &c. No one that is so framed, I maintain it, but should tremble.

Postscript for your daughter's eyes only.

Dear Miss, — Your pretty little letterets make me ashamed of my great stragglng coarse handwriting. I wonder where you get pens to write so small. Sure they must be the pinions of a small wren, or a robin. If you write so in your album, you must give us glasses to read by. I have seen a lady's similar book all writ in following fashion; I think it pretty and fanciful, —

O how I love in early dawn
To bend my steps o'er flowery lawn —

which I think has an agreeable variety to the eye. Which I recommend to your notice, with friend Elia's best wishes.

NOTE

[Lamb's postscript is written in extremely small characters, and the letters of the two lines of verse are in alternate red and black inks. It was this letter which, Edward FitzGerald tells us, Thackeray pressed to his forehead, with the remark "*Saint Charles!*" Hitherto, the postscript not having been thought worthy of print by previous editors, it was a little difficult to understand why this particular letter had been selected for Thackeray's epithet. But when one thinks of the patience with which, after making gentle fun of her father,

Lamb sat down to amuse Lucy Barton, and, as Thackeray did, thinks also of his whole life, it becomes more clear. — E. V. LUCAS.]

CCCCXXI. — TO ALARIC A. WATTS

December 28, 1824.

Dear Sir, — Thanks for your volume. If any *verse* is forthcoming next year, you shall have it, but I do not make two lines on an average any year now. My poor prose, which is near exhausted, is the *London's*, and my dry spring is not likely to overflow to a second reservoir. I saw S. T. C. on Sunday, who expressed his high satisfaction at the contents as well as the exterior of the *Souvenir*.

You will oblige me by not thinking of sending me a second superior copy. This already outshines and puts to shame my old dusty library.

With much respect, yours, C. LAMB

CCCCXXII. — TO JOHN BATES DIBDIN

January 11, 1825.

My dear Sir, — Pray return my best thanks to your father for his little volume. It is like all of his I have seen, spirited, good-humoured, and redolent of the wit and humour of a century ago. He should have lived with Gay and his set. The *Chessiad* is so clever that I relish'd it in spite of my total ignorance of the game. I have it not before me, but I remember a capital simile of the char-

woman letting in her watchman husband, which is better than Butler's lobster turned to red. Hazard is a grand character, Jove in his chair. When you are disposed to leave your one room for my six, Colebrooke is where it was, and my sister begs me to add that as she is disappointed of meeting your sister *your way*, we shall be most happy to see her *our way*, when you have an evening to spare. Do not stand on ceremonies and introductions, but come at once. I need not say that if you can induce your father to join the party, it will be so much the pleasanter. Can you name an evening *next week*? I give you long credit. Meantime am, as usual, yours truly,
C. L.

When I saw the *Chessiad* advertised by C. D. the younger, I hoped it might be yours. What title is left for you —

Charles Dibdin *the younger, junior*. O no, you are Timothy.

CCCCXXIII.—TO THOMAS ALLSOP

January 17, 1825.

Dear Allsop, — I acknowledge with thanks the receipt of a draft on Messrs. Wms. for £81. 11. 3., which I haste to cash in the present alarming state of the money market. Hurst and Robinson gone! I have imagined a chorus of ill-used authors singing on the occasion, —

What should we do when booksellers break?

We should rejoice.

Da capo.

We regret exceedingly Mrs. Allsop's being unwell. Mary or both will come and see her soon. The frost is cruel, and we have both colds. I take pills again, which battle with your wine; and victory hovers doubtful. By the by, tho' not disinclined to presents, I remember our bargain to take a dozen at sale price, and must demur.

With once again thanks and best loves to Mrs. A. Turn over — yours, C. LAMB

CCCCXXIV. — TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

January 20, 1825.

The brevity of this is owing to scratching it off at my desk amid expected interruptions. By habit, I can write letters only at office.

Dear Miss H.,— Thank you for a noble goose, which wanted only the massive encrustation that we used to pick-axe open about this season in old Gloster Place. When shall we eat another goose-pye together? The pheasant, too, must not be forgotten, twice as big and half as good as a partridge.

You ask about the editor of the *London*; I know of none. This first specimen is flat and pert enough to justify subscribers who grudge at t' other shilling. De Quincey's *Parody* was submitted to him before printed, and had his *Probatum*. The *Horns* is in a poor taste, resembling

the most laboured papers in the *Spectator*. I had sign'd it *Jack Horner*: but Taylor and Hessey said, it would be thought an offensive article, unless I put my known signature to it; and wrung from me my slow consent. But did you read the *Memoir of Liston*? and did you guess whose it was? Of all the lies I ever put off, I value this most. It is from top to toe, every paragraph, pure invention; and has passed for gospel; has been republished in newspapers, and in the penny play-bills of the night, as an authentic account. I shall certainly go to the Naughty Man some day for my fibbings. In the next Number I figure as a Theologian! and have attacked my late brethren, the Unitarians. What Jack-Pudding tricks I shall play next, I know not. I am almost at the end of my tether.

Coleridge is quite blooming; but his book has not budded yet. I hope I have spelt Torquay right now, and that this will find you all mending, and looking forward to a London flight with the spring. Winter *we* have had none, but plenty of foul weather. I have lately pick'd up an epigram which pleased me.

Two noble earls, whom if I quote,
Some folks might call me sinner;
The one invented half a coat;
The other half a dinner.

The plan was good, as some will say,
And fitted to console one:
Because, in this poor starving day,
Few can afford a whole one.

I have made the lame one still lamer by imperfect memory, but spite of bald diction, a little done to it might improve it into a good one. You have nothing else to do at [*“Talk kay” here written and scratched out*] Torquay. Suppose you try it. Well, God bless you all, as wishes Mary, most sincerely, with many thanks for letter, &c.,

ELIA

CCCCXXV. — TO VINCENT NOVELLO

January 25, 1825.

Dear Corelli, — My sister's cold is as obstinate as an old Handelian, whom a modern amateur is trying to convert to Mozartism. As company must and always does injure it, Emma and I propose to come to you in the evening of to-morrow, *instead of meeting here*. An early bread-and-cheese supper at half-past eight will oblige us. Loves to the bearer of many children.

C. LAMB

I sign with a black seal, that you may begin to think her cold has killed Mary, which will be an agreeable *unsurprise* when you read the note.

CCCCXXVI. — TO JOHN BATES DIBDIN

January, 1825.

Dear D., — My sister's cold continues strong and obstinate. We therefore propose to see you,

&c., sometime in the latter end of next week, instead of this. But *come you must*.

Believe us, with apologies to your sister,
Yours sincerely, C. LAMB

CCCCXXVII. — TO JOHN BATES DIBDIN

February 8, 1825.

Dear Sir, — We expect you of course to-morrow. As to the time, six is pleasanter to us than seven, and seven than eight. But at any hour we shall be most glad to see you and sisters.

Yours, &c., C. L.

CCCCXXVIII. — TO BERNARD BARTON

February 10, 1825.

Dear B., — I am vexed that ugly paper should have offended. I kept it as clear from objectionable phrases as possible, and it was Hessey's fault, and my weakness, that it did not appear anonymous. No more of it, for God's sake.

The *Spirit of the Age* is by Hazlitt. The characters of Coleridge, &c., he had done better in former publications, the praise and the abuse much stronger, &c., but the new ones are capitally done. Horne Tooke is a matchless portrait. My advice is, to borrow it rather than read [buy] it. I have it. He has laid on too many colours on my likeness, but I have had so much injustice done me in my own name that I make a rule of accepting

as much over-measure to *Elia* as gentlemen think proper to bestow. Lay it on and spare not.

Your gentleman brother sets my mouth a-watering after liberty. O that I were kicked out of Leadenhall with every mark of indignity, and a competence in my fob. The birds of the air would not be so free as I should. How I would prance and curvet it, and pick up cowslips, and ramble about purposeless as an idiot! The author-mometer is a good fancy. I have caused great speculation in the dramatic (not *tby*) world by a lying Life of Liston, all pure invention. The town has swallowed it, and it is copied into newspapers, Play-bills, etc., as authentic. You do not know the Droll, and possibly missed reading the article (in our first Number, New Series). A life more improbable for him to have lived would not be easily invented. But your rebuke, coupled with *Dream on J. Bunyan*, checks me. I'd rather do more in my favourite way, but feel dry. I must laugh sometimes. I am poor Hypochondriacus, and *not* Liston.

Our second Number is all trash. What are T. and H. about? It is whip syllabub, "thin sown with aught of profit or delight." Thin sown! not a germ of fruit or corn. Why did poor Scott die! There was comfort in writing with such associates as were his little band of scribblers, some gone away, some affronted away, and I am left as the solitary widow looking for water-cresses.

The only clever hand they have is Darley, who has written on the Dramatists, under name of John Lacy. But his function seems suspended.

I have been harassed more than usually at office, which has stopt my correspondence lately. I write with a confused aching head, and you must accept this apology for a letter.

I will do something soon if I can as a peace-offering to the Queen of the East Angles. Something she sha'n't scold about.

For the present, farewell. Thine, C. L.

I am fifty years old this day. Drink my health.

CCCCXXIX. — TO THOMAS MANNING

February, 1825.

My dear M., — You might have come inopportunely a week since, when we had an inmate. At present and for as long as *ever* you like, our castle is at your service. I saw Tuthill yesternight, who has done for me what may, —

To all my nights and days to come,
Give solely sovran sway and masterdom.

But I dare not hope, for fear of disappointment. I cannot be more explicit at present. But I have it under his own hand, that I am *non-capacitated* (I cannot write it *in-*) for business. O joyous imbecility! Not a susurraton of this to *anybody*!

Mary's love.

C. LAMB

CCCCXXX. — TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

March 1, 1825.

Dear Miss Hutchinson, — Your news has made us all very sad. I had my hopes to the last. I seem as if I were disturbing you at such an awful time even by a reply. But I must acknowledge your kindness in presuming upon the interest we shall all feel on the subject. No one will more feel it than Robinson, to whom I have written. No one more than he and we acknowledged the nobleness and worth of what we have lost. Words are perfectly idle. We can only pray for resignation to the survivors. Our dearest expressions of condolence to Mrs. Monkhouse at this time in particular. God bless you both. I have nothing of ourselves to tell you, and if I had, I could not be so unreverent as to trouble you with it. We are all well, that is all. Farewell, the departed — and the left. Yours and his, while memory survives, cordially,

C. LAMB

CCCCXXXI. — TO B. W. PROCTER

Dear P., — We shall be most glad to see you, though more glad to have seen double *you*, but we will expect finer walking-weather. Bring my *Congreve*, second volume, in your hand. I have two books of yours lock'd up, but how shall I tell it — *horresco referens* — that I miss, and can't possibly account for it, *Hollis on Johnson's Milton!*

I will march the town thro', but I will repair the loss. You will be sorry to hear that poor Monkhouse died on Saturday at Clifton. C. L.

CCCCXXXII. — TO BERNARD BARTON

March 23, 1825.

Dear B. B., — I have had no impulse to write, or attend to any single object but myself, for weeks past. My single self. I by myself, I. I am sick of hope deferred. The grand wheel is in agitation that is to turn up my fortune, but round it rolls and will turn up nothing. I have a glimpse of freedom, of becoming a gentleman at large, but I am put off from day to day. I have offered my resignation, and it is neither accepted nor rejected. Eight weeks am I kept in this fearful suspense. Guess what an absorbing stake I feel it. I am not conscious of the existence of friends present or absent. The East India Directors alone can be that thing to me — or not.

I have just learn'd that nothing will be decided this week. Why the next? Why any week? It has fretted me into an itch of the fingers, I rub 'em against paper and write to you, rather than not allay this scorbuta.

While I can write, let me adjure you to have no doubts of Irving. Let Mr. Mitford drop his disrespect. Irving has prefixed a dedication (of a Missionary Subject first part) to Coleridge, the most beautiful, cordial, and sincere. He there

acknowledges his obligation to S. T. C. for his knowledge of Gospel truths, the nature of a Xtian Church, &c., to the talk of S. T. C. (at whose Gamaliel feet he sits weekly) [more] than to that of all the men living. This from him — the great dandled and petted sectarian — to a religious character so equivocal in the world's eye as that of S. T. C., so foreign to the Kirk's estimate! — Can this man be a quack? The language is as affecting as the spirit of the dedication. Some friend told him, "This dedication will do you no good," *i. e.* not in the world's repute, or with your own people. "That is a reason for doing it," quoth Irving. I am thoroughly pleased with him. He is firm, outspeaking, intrepid — and docile as a pupil of Pythagoras. You must like him. Yours, in tremors of painful hope,

C. LAMB

CCCCXXXIII. — TO H. C. ROBINSON

March 29, 1825.

I have left the d——d India House for ever!
Give me great joy.

C. LAMB

CCCCXXXIV. — TO W. WORDSWORTH

April 6, 1825.

Dear Wordsworth, — I have been several times meditating a letter to you concerning the good thing which has befallen me, but the thought

of poor Monkhouse came across me. He was one that I had exulted in the prospect of congratulating me. He and you were to have been the first participators, for indeed it has been ten weeks since the first motion of it.

Here I am then after thirty-three years' slavery, sitting in my own room at eleven o'clock this finest of all April mornings, a freed man, with £441 a year for the remainder of my life, live I as long as John Dennis, who outlived his annuity and starved at ninety. £441, *i. e.* £450, with a deduction of £9 for a provision secured to my sister, she being survivor, the pension guaranteed by Act *Georgii Tertii*, &c.

I came home for ever on Tuesday in last week. The incomprehensibleness of my condition overwhelm'd me. It was like passing from life into eternity. Every year to be as long as three, *i. e.* to have three times as much real time, time that is my own, in it! I wandered about thinking I was happy, but feeling I was not. But that tumultuousness is passing off, and I begin to understand the nature of the gift. Holydays, even the annual month, were always uneasy joys: their conscious fugitiveness — the craving after making the most of them. Now, when all is holyday, there are no holydays. I can sit at home in rain or shine without a restless impulse for walkings. I am daily steadying, and shall soon find it as natural to me to be my own master, as it has been irksome to have had a master. Mary wakes

every morning with an obscure feeling that some good has happened to us.

Leigh Hunt and Montgomery after their releasements [*they had been imprisoned for libel*] describe the shock of their emancipation much as I feel mine. But it hurt their frames. I eat, drink, and sleep sound as ever. I lay no anxious schemes for going hither and thither, but take things as they occur. Yesterday I excursed twenty miles, to-day I write a few letters. Pleasuring was for fugitive play days, mine are fugitive only in the sense that life is fugitive. Freedom and life co-existent.

At the foot of such a call upon you for gratulation, I am asham'd to advert to that melancholy event. Monkhouse was a character I learn'd to love slowly, but it grew upon me, yearly, monthly, daily. What a chasm has it made in our pleasant parties! His noble friendly face was always coming before me, till this hurrying event in my life came, and for the time has absorpt all interests. In fact it has shaken me a little. My old desk companions with whom I have had such merry hours seem to reproach me for removing my lot from among them. They were pleasant creatures, but to the anxieties of business, and a weight of possible worse ever impending, I was not equal. Tuthill and Gilman gave me my certificates. I laughed at the friendly lie implied in them, but my sister shook her head and said it was all true. Indeed this last winter I was jaded out; winters

were always worse than other parts of the year, because the spirits are worse, and I had no daylight. In summer I had daylight evenings. The relief was hinted to me from a superior power, when I poor slave had not a hope but that I must wait another seven years with Jacob — and lo! the Rachel which I coveted is brought to me.

Have you read the noble dedication of Irving's *Missionary Orations* to S. T. C.? Who shall call this man a quack hereafter? What the Kirk will think of it neither I nor Irving care. When somebody suggested to him that it would not be likely to do him good, *videlicet* among his own people, "That is a reason for doing it" was his noble answer.

That Irving thinks he has profited mainly by S. T. C., I have no doubt. The very style of the Dedication shows it.

Communicate my news to Southey, and beg his pardon for my being so long acknowledging his kind present of the *Church*, which circumstances I do not wish to explain, but having no reference to himself, prevented at the time. Assure him of my deep respect and friendliest feelings.

Divide the same, or rather each take the whole to you, I mean you and all yours. To Miss Hutchinson I must write separate. What's her address? I want to know about Mrs. M.

Farewell! and end at last, long selfish letter!

C. LAMB

NOTE

[At a Court of Directors of the India House held on March 29, 1825, it was resolved "that the resignation of Mr. Charles Lamb of the Accountant General's Office, on account of certified ill health, be accepted, and, it appearing that he has served the Company faithfully for 33 years, and is now in the receipt of an income of £730 per annum, he be allowed a pension of £450 (four hundred and fifty pounds) per annum, under the provisions of the act of the 53 Geo. III., cap. 155, to commence from this day."]

CCCCXXXV.—TO BERNARD BARTON

April 6, 1825.

Dear B. B.,—My spirits are so tumultuary with the novelty of my recent emancipation, that I have scarce steadiness of hand, much more mind, to compose a letter.

I am free, B. B.,—free as air.

The little bird that wings the sky
Knows no such liberty!

I was set free on Tuesday in last week at four o'clock. I came home forever!

I have been describing my feelings as well as I can to Wordsworth in a long letter, and don't care to repeat. Take it briefly that for a few days I was painfully oppressed by so mighty a change; but it is becoming daily more natural to me.

I went and sat among 'em all at my old thirty-three years' desk yester morning; and deuce take me if I had not yearnings at leaving all my old pen-and-ink fellows, merry sociable lads, at leaving them in the lurch, fag, fag, fag.

The comparison of my own superior felicity gave me anything but pleasure.

B. B., I would not serve another seven years for seven hundred thousand pounds! I have got £441 net for life, sanctioned by Act of Parliament, with a provision for Mary if she survives me. I will live another fifty years; or, if I live but ten, they will be thirty, reckoning the quantity of real time in them, *i. e.* the time that is a man's own.

Tell me how you like *Barbara S.* — will it be received in atonement for the foolish vision, I mean by the lady? *Apropos*, I never saw Mrs. Crauford in my life, nevertheless 't is all true of somebody.

Address me in future, Colebrook Cottage, Islington. I am really nervous (but that will wear off), so take this brief announcement.

Yours truly, C. L.

CCCCXXXVI.—TO MISS HUTCHINSON

April 18, 1825.

Dear Miss Hutchinson, — You want to know all about my gaol delivery. Take it then. About twelve weeks since I had a sort of intimation that a resignation might be well accepted from me. This was a kind bird's whisper. On that hint I spake. Gilman and Tuthill furnish'd me with certificates of wasted health and sore spirits — not much more than the truth, I promise

you — and for nine weeks I was kept in a fright. I had gone too far to recede, and they might take advantage and dismiss me with a much less sum than I had reckoned on. However, liberty came at last with a liberal provision. I have given up what I could have lived on in the country, but have enough to live here by management and scribbling occasionally. I would not go back to my prison for seven years longer for £10,000 a year; seven years after one is fifty is no trifle to give up. Still I am a young *pensioner*, and have served but thirty-three years, very few I assure you retire before forty, forty-five, or fifty years' service. You will ask how I bear my freedom. Faith, for some days I was staggered. Could not comprehend the magnitude of my deliverance; was confused, giddy, knew not whether I was on my head or my heel as they say. But those giddy feelings have gone away, and my weather-glass stands at a degree or two above

CONTENT

I go about quiet, and have none of that restless hunting after recreation which made holydays formerly uneasy joys. All being holydays, I feel as if I had none, as they do in heaven, where 't is all red-letter days.

I have a kind letter from the Wordsworths *congratulatory* not a little.

It is a damp, I do assure you, amid all my prospects that I can receive *none* from a quarter upon which I had calculated, almost more than from

any, upon receiving congratulations. I had grown to like poor Monkhouse more and more. I do not esteem a soul living or not living more warmly than I had grown to esteem and value him. But words are vain. We have none of us to count upon many years. That is the only cure for sad thoughts. If only some died, and the rest were permanent on earth, what a thing a friend's death would be then !

I must take leave, having put off answering a load of letters to this morning, and this, alas ! is the first. Our kindest remembrances to Mrs. Monkhouse and believe us,

Yours most truly, C. LAMB

CCCCXXXVII. — TO WILLIAM HONE

May 2, 1825.

Dear Hone, — I send you a trifle ; you have seen my lines, I suppose, in the *London*. I cannot tell you how much I like the *St. Chad Wells*.

Yours truly, C. LAMB

P. S. Why did you not stay, or come again, yesterday ?

CCCCXXXVIII. — TO W. WORDSWORTH

May, 1825.

Dear W., — I write post-haste to ensure a frank. Thanks for your hearty congratulations. I may

now date from the sixth week of my Hegira or Flight from Leadenhall. I have lived so much in it, that a summer seems already past, and 't is but early May yet with you and other people. How I look down on the slaves and drudges of the world! its inhabitants are a vast cotton-web of spin-spin-spinners. O the carking cares! O the money-grubbers — sempiternal muck-worms!

Your Virgil I have lost sight of, but suspect it is in the hands of Sir G. Beaumont. I think that circumstances made me shy of procuring it before. Will you write to him about it? and your commands shall be obeyed to a tittle.

Coleridge has just finish'd his prize Essay, which if it get the prize he'll touch an additional £100 I fancy. His book, too (commentary on Bishop Leighton), is quite finished and *penes* Taylor and Hessey.

In the *London* which is just out (1st May) are two papers entitled the *Superannuated Man*, which I wish you to see, and also 1st April a little thing called *Barbara S——*, a story gleaned from Miss Kelly. The *London Magazine*, if you can get it, will save my enlargement upon the topic of my manumission.

I must scribble to make up my *hiatus crumenaë*, for there are so many ways, pious and profligate, of getting rid of money in this vast city and suburbs that I shall miss my thirds: but *couragio*. I despair not. Your kind hint of the cottage was

well thrown out. An anchorage for *age* and school of economy when necessity comes. But without this latter I have an unconquerable terror of changing place. It does not agree with us. I say it from conviction; else I do sometimes ruralize in fancy.

Some d——d people are come in and I must finish abruptly. By d——d, I only mean *deuced*. 'Tis these suitors of Penelope that make it necessary to authorise a little for gin and mutton and such trifles.

Excuse my abortive scribble.

Yours, not in more haste than heart, C. L.

Love and recollects to all the Wms., Doras, Maries round your Wrekin.

Mary is capitally well. Do write to Sir G. B. for I am shyish of applying to him.

CCCCXXXIX.—TO MISS NORRIS

1825.

Hypochondriac. We can't reckon avec any certainty for une heure * * * as follows :

ENGLAND

I like the taxes when they 're not too many,
I like a sea-coal fire when not too dear ;
I like a beafsteak, too, as well as any,
Have no objection to a pot of beer ;
I like the *weather when it's not too rainy*,
That is, I like two months of every year.

ITALY

I also like to dine on becaficas,
To see the sun set, sure he'll rise to-morrow,
Not through a misty morning twinkling weak as
A drunken man's dead eye in maudlin sorrow.
But with all heaven t' himself; that day will break as
Beauteous as cloudless, nor be forced to borrow
That sort of farthing candlelight which glimmers
Where reeking London's smoky cauldron simmers.

Kind regards to Mama and remembrances to Frere Richard. Dieu remercie mon frere can't lizer Fransay. I have written this letter with a most villainous pen—called a patent one.

En finis je remarque I was not offensé a votre fransay et I was not embarrassé to make it out. Adieu.

I have not quite done that——instead of your company in Miss Norris; epistle has determined me to come if heaven, earth, and myself can compass it. Amen. [No Signature.]

CCCCXL.—TO THOMAS ALLSOP

May 29, 1825.

Dear A.,—I am as mad as the devil—but I had engaged myself and Mary to accompany Mrs. Kenny to Kentish-Town to dinner at a common friend's on Friday, before I knew of Mary's engaging you.

Can you and Mrs. A. exchange the day for Sunday, or what other. Write.

Success to the gnomes!

C. LAMB

CCCCXLI. — TO CHARLES CHAMBERS

May, 1825.

With regard to a John-dory, which you desire to be particularly informed about, I honour the fish, but it is rather on account of *Quin* who patronised it, and whose taste (of a *dead man*) I had as lieve go by as anybody's (*Apicius* and *Heliogabalus* excepted — this latter started nightingales' tongues and peacocks' brains as a garnish).

Else, in *itself*, and trusting to my own poor single judgment, it hath not that moist mel-low oleaginous gliding smooth descent from the tongue to the palate, thence to the stomach, &c., that your Brighton turbot hath, which I take to be the most friendly and familiar flavour of any that swims — most genial and at home to the palate.

Nor has it on the other hand that fine falling-off flakiness, that oleaginous peeling-off (as it were, like a sea-onion), which endears your cod's head and shoulders to some appetites; that manly firmness, combined with a sort of woman-ish coming-in-pieces, which the same cod's head and shoulders hath, where the *whole* is easily separable, pliant to a knife or a spoon, but each *individual flake* presents a pleasing resistance to the opposed tooth. You understand me — these delicate subjects are necessarily obscure.

But it has a third flavour of its own, perfectly distinct from cod or turbot, which it must be owned may to some not injudicious palates render it acceptable — but to my unpractised tooth it presented rather a crude river-fish-flavour, like your pike or carp, and perhaps like them should have been tamed and corrected by some laborious and well-chosen sauce. Still I always suspect a fish which requires so much of artificial settings-off. Your choicest relishes (like Nature's loveliness) need not the foreign aid of ornament, but are when unadorned (that is, with nothing but a little plain anchovy and a squeeze of lemon) then adorned the most. However, I shall go to Brighton again next summer, and shall have an opportunity of correcting my judgment, if it is not sufficiently informed. I can only say that when Nature was pleased to make the John-dory so notoriously deficient in outward graces (as to be sure he is the very rhinoceros of fishes, the ugliest dog that swims, except perhaps the sea satyr, which I never saw, but which they say is terrible), when she formed him with so few external advantages, she might have bestowed a more elaborate finish in his parts internal, and have given him a relish, a sapor, to recommend him, as she made Pope a poet to make up for making him crooked.

I am sorry to find that you have got a knack of saying things which are not true to shew your wit. If I had no wit but what I must shew at

the expence of my virtue or my modesty, I had as lieve be as stupid as * * * at the tea warehouse. Depend upon it, my dear Chambers, that an ounce of integrity at our death-bed will stand us in more avail than all the wit of Congreve or * * * For instance, you tell me a fine story about Truss, and his playing at Leamington, which I know to be false, because I have advice from Derby that he was whipt through the town on that very day you say he appeared in some character or other, for robbing an old woman at church of a seal-ring. And Dr. Parr has been two months dead. So it won't do to scatter these untrue stories about among people that know anything. Besides, your forte is not invention. It is *judgment*, particularly shown in your choice of dishes. We seem in that instance born under one star. I like you for liking hare. I esteem you for disrelishing minced veal. Liking is too cold a word. — I love you for your noble attachment to the fat unctuous juices of deer's flesh and the green unspeakable of turtle. I honour you for your endeavours to esteem and approve of my favourite, which I ventured to recommend to you as a substitute for hare, bullock's heart, and I am not offended that you cannot taste it with *my* palate. A true son of Epicurus should reserve one taste peculiar to himself. For a long time I kept the secret about the exceeding deliciousness of the marrow of boiled knuckle of veal, till my tongue weakly

ran riot in its praises, and now it is prostitute and common. But I have made one discovery which I will not impart till my dying scene is over, perhaps it will be my last mouthful in this world: delicious thought, enough to sweeten (or rather make savoury) the hour of death. It is a little square bit about this size [*Here Lamb makes a square about $1 \times \frac{1}{2}$ inches*] in or near the knuckle-bone of a fried joint of * * * fat I can't call it nor lean neither altogether, it is that beautiful compound, which Nature must have made in Paradise Park venison, before she separated the two substances, the dry and the oleaginous, to punish sinful mankind; Adam ate them entire and inseparate, and this little taste of Eden in the knuckle-bone of a fried * * * seems the only relique of a Paraisaical state. When I die, an exact description of its topography shall be left in a cupboard with a key, inscribed on which these words, "C. Lamb dying imparts this to C. Chambers as the only worthy depository of such a secret." You'll drop a tear.

CCCCXLII. — TO S. T. COLERIDGE

June, 1825.

My dear Coleridge, — With pain and grief, I must *entreat* you to excuse us on Thursday. My head, though externally correct, has had a severe concussion in my long illness, and the very idea

of an engagement hanging over for a day or two, forbids my rest; and I get up miserable. I am not well enough for company. I do assure you, no other thing prevents my coming. I expect Field and his brothers this or to-morrow evening, and it worries me to death that I am not ostensibly ill enough to put 'em off. I will get better, when I shall hope to see your nephew. He will come again. Mary joins in best love to the Gillmans. Do, I earnestly entreat you, excuse me. I assure you, again, that I am not fit to go out yet. Yours (tho' shattered), C. LAMB

CCCCXLIII. — TO HENRY COLBURN

June 14, 1825.

Dear Sir, — I am quite ashamed, after your kind letter, of having expressed any disappointment about my remuneration. It is quite equivalent to the value of anything I have yet sent you. I had twenty guineas a sheet from the *London*; and what I did for them was more worth that sum, than anything, I am afraid, I can now produce, would be worth the lesser sum. I used up all my best thoughts in that publication, and I do not like to go on writing worse and worse, and feeling that I do so. I want to try something else. However, if any subject turns up, which I think will do your magazine no discredit, you shall have it at *your* price, or something between *that* and my old price. I prefer writing to see-

ing you just now, for after such a letter as I have received from you, in truth I am ashamed to see you. We will never mention the thing again.
Your obliged friend and servant, C. LAMB

CCCCXLIV.— TO S. T. COLERIDGE

July 2, 1825.

Dear C.,— We are going off to Enfield, to Allsop's, for a day or two, with some intention of succeeding them in their lodging for a time, for this damn'd nervous fever (*vide London Magazine* for July) indisposes me for seeing any friends, and never any poor devil was so befriended as I am. Do you know any poor solitary human that wants that cordial to life a— true friend? I can spare him twenty; he shall have 'em good cheap. I have gallipots of 'em— genuine balm of cares— a-going— a-going— a-going. Little plagues plague me a thousand times more than ever. I am like a disembodied soul— in this my eternity. I feel everything entirely, all in all and all in etc. This price I pay for liberty, but am richly content to pay it.

The *Odes* are four-fifths done by Hood, a silentish young man you met at Islington one day— an invalid. The rest are Reynolds's, whose sister H. has recently married. I have not had a broken finger in them.

They are hearty good-natured things, and I would put my name to 'em chearfully, if I could

as honestly. I complimented them in a newspaper, with an abatement for those puns you laud so. They are generally an excess. A pun is a thing of too much consequence to be thrown in as a make-weight. You shall read one of the addresses over, and miss the puns, and it shall be quite as good and better than when you discover 'em. A pun is a noble thing *per se*: O never lug it in as an accessory. A pun is a sole object for reflection (*vide my aids* to that recessment from a savage state) — it is entire, it fills the mind: it is perfect as a sonnet, better. It limps ashamed in the train and retinue of humour: it knows it should have an establishment of its own. The one, for instance, I made the other day; I forget what it was.

Hood will be gratify'd, as much as I am, by your mistake. I liked *Grimaldi* the best; it is true painting, of abstract clownery, and that precious concrete of a clown: and the rich succession of images, and words almost such, in the first half of the *Mag. Ignotum*. Your picture of the camel, that would not or could not thread your nice needle-eye of subtilisms, was confirm'd by Elton, who perfectly appreciated his abrupt departure. Elton borrowed the *Aids* from Hessey (by the way what is your enigma about Cupid? I am Cytherea's son, if I understand a tittle of it), and return'd it next day saying that twenty years ago, when he was pure, he *thought* as you do now, but that he now thinks as you did twenty years

ago. But E. seems a very honest fellow. Hood has just come in; his sick eyes sparkled into health when he read your approbation. They had meditated a copy for you, but postponed it till a neater second edition, which is at hand.

Have you heard *the Creature* at the Opera House — Signor *Nonvir sed Veluti vir?*

Like Orpheus, he is said to draw storks, &c., *after* him. A picked raisin for a sweet banquet of sounds; but I affect not these exotics. *Nos durum genus*, as mellifluous Ovid hath it.

Fanny Holcroft is just come in, with her paternal severity of aspect. She has frozen a bright thought which should have follow'd. She makes us marble, with too little conceiving. 'T was respecting the Signor, whom I honour on this side idolatry. Well, more of this anon.

We are setting out to walk to Enfield after our beans and bacon, which are just smoking.

Kindest remembrances to the G.'s ever.

Second day, third month of my Hegira or Flight from Leadenhall.

C. L. *Olim Clericus*

CCCCXLV.—TO BERNARD BARTON

July 2, 1825.

My dear B. B., — My nervous attack has so unfitted me, that I have not courage to sit down to a letter. My poor pittance in the *London* you will see is drawn from my sickness. Your book

is very acceptable to me, because most of it is new to me ; but your book itself we cannot thank you for more sincerely than for the introduction you favoured us with to Anne Knight. Now cannot I write *Mrs. Anne Knight* for the life of me. She is a very pleas—, but I won't write all we have said of her so often to ourselves, because I suspect you would read it to her. Only give my sister's and my kindest remembrances to her, and how glad we are we can say that word. If ever she come to Southwark again I count upon another pleasant *bridge* walk with her. Tell her, I got home, time for a rubber ; but poor Tryphena will not understand that phrase of the worldlings.

I am hardly able to appreciate your volume now. But I liked the dedication much, and the apology for your bald burying-grounds. To Shelley, but *that* is not new. To the young Vesper-singer, Great Bealing's, Playford, and what not ?

If there be a cavil it is that the topics of religious consolation, however beautiful, are repeated till a sort of triteness attends them. It seems as if you were for ever losing friends' children by death, and reminding their parents of the Resurrection. Do children die so often, and so good, in your parts ? The topic, taken from the consideration that they are snatch'd away from *possible vanities*, seems hardly sound ; for to an omniscient eye their conditional failings must be

one with their actual; but I am too unwell for theology.

Such as I am, I am yours, and A. K.'s truly,
C. LAMB

CCCCXLVI.—TO JOHN AITKEN

July 5, 1825.

Dear Sir, — With thanks for your last Number of the *Cabinet*; as I cannot arrange with a London publisher to reprint *Rosamund Gray* as a book, it will be at your service to admit into the *Cabinet* as soon as you please. Your humble servant,

CHARLES LAMB

Emma, eldest of your name,
Meekly trusting in her God
Midst the red-hot plough-shares trod,
And unscorch'd preserved her fame.

By that test if *you* were tried,
Ugly flames might be defied;
Though devouring fire's a glutton,
Through the trial you might go
"On the light fantastic toe,"
Nor for plough-shares care a BUTTON.¹

CCCCXLVII.—TO THOMAS ALLSOP

July, 1825.

Dear Allsop, — We are bent upon coming here to-morrow for a few weeks. Despatch a porter

[¹ It is said that the Buttons, for one of whom this acrostic was written, were cousins of the Lambs. — E. V. LUCAS.]

to me this evening, or by nine to-morrow morning, to say how far it will interfere with your proposed coming down on Saturday. If the house will hold us, we can be together while we stay.

Yours, C. LAMB

After a hot walk.

CCCCXLVIII. — TO THOMAS ALLSOP

July 20, 1825.

Dear Allsop, — It is too hot to write. Here we are, having turned you out of your beds, but willing to resign in your favour, or make any shifts with you. Our best loves to Mrs. Allsop, from Mrs. Leishman's, this warm Saturday.

Yours truly, C. LAMB

This damned afternoon sun! Thanks for your note, which came in more than good time.

CCCCXLIX. — TO WILLIAM HONE

July 25, 1825.

Dear H., — The *Quotidian* came in as pleasantly as it was looked for at breakfast time yesterday. You have repaid my poor stanzas with interest. This last interlineation is one of those instances of affectation rightly applied. Read the sentence without it, how bald it is! Your idea of "worsted in the dog-days" was capital.

We are here so comfortable that I am confident we shall stay one month, from this date, most probably longer; so if you please, you can cut your out-of-town room for that time. I have sent up my petit farce altered; and Harley is at the theatre now. It cannot come out for some weeks. When it does, we think not of leaving here, but to borrow a bed of you for the night.

I write principally to say that the fourth of August is coming, — Dogget's Coat and Badge Day on the water. You will find a good deal about him in *Cibber's Apology*, octavo, facing the window; and something haply in a thin blackish quarto among the plays, facing the fireside.

You have done with mad dogs; else there is a print of Rowlandson's, or somebody's, of people in pursuit of one in a village, which might have come in: also Goldsmith's verses.

Mary's kind remembrance. C. LAMB

CCCCL. — TO THOMAS ALLSOP

August, 1825.

Dear A., — Mary is afraid lest the calico and handkerchiefs have miscarried which you were to send. Have you sent 'em?

Item a bill with 'em including the former silks, and balance struck in a tradesman-like way.

Yours truly, C. L,

CCCCLI. — TO BERNARD BARTON

August 10, 1825.

Dear B. B., — You must excuse my not writing before, when I tell you we are on a visit at Enfield, where I do not feel it natural to sit down to a letter. It is at all times an exertion. I had rather talk with you, and Ann Knight, quietly at Colebrook Lodge, over the matter of your last. You mistake me when you express misgivings about my relishing a series of scriptural poems. I wrote confusedly. What I meant to say was, that one or two consolatory poems on deaths would have had a more condensed effect than many. Scriptural — devotional topics — admit of infinite variety. So far from poetry tiring me because religious, I can read, and I say it seriously, the homely old version of the Psalms in our Prayer-books for an hour or two together sometimes without sense of weariness.

I did not express myself clearly about what I think a false topic insisted on so frequently in consolatory addresses on the death of infants. I know something like it is in Scripture, but I think humanly spoken. It is a natural thought, a sweet fallacy to the survivors — but still a fallacy. If it stands on the doctrine of this being a probationary state, it is liable to this dilemma. Omniscience, to whom possibility must be clear as act, must know of the child, what it would hereafter turn out: if good, then the topic is false to

say it is secured from falling into future wilfulness, vice, &c. If bad, I do not see how its exemption from certain future overt acts by being snatched away at all tells in its favour. You stop the arm of a murderer, or arrest the finger of a pickpurse, but is not the guilt incurred as much by the intent as if never so much acted? Why children are hurried off, and old reprobates of a hundred left, whose trial humanly we may think was complete at fifty, is among the obscurities of Providence. The very notion of a state of probation has darkness in it. The All-knower has no need of satisfying his eyes by seeing what we will do, when he knows before what we will do. Methinks we might be condemn'd before commission. In these things we grope and flounder, and if we can pick up a little human comfort that the child taken is snatch'd from vice (no great compliment to it, by the bye), let us take it. And as to where an untried child goes, whether to join the assembly of its elders who have borne the heat of the day — fire-purified martyrs, and torment-sifted confessors — what know we? We promise heaven, methinks, too cheaply, and assign large revenues to minors, incompetent to manage them. Epitaphs run upon this topic of consolation, till the very frequency induces a cheapness. Tickets for admission into Paradise are sculptured out at a penny a letter, twopence a syllable, &c. It is all a mystery; and the more I try to express my meaning (having

none that is clear) the more I flounder. Finally, write what your own conscience, which to you is the unerring judge, seems best, and be careless about the whimsies of such a half-baked notionist as I am.

We are here in a most pleasant country, full of walks, and idle to our hearts' desire. Taylor has dropt the *London*. It was indeed a dead weight. It has got in the Slough of Despond. I shuffle off my part of the pack, and stand like Christian with light and merry shoulders. It had got silly, indecorous, pert, and everything that is bad.

Both our kind *remembrances* to Mrs. K. and yourself, and stranger's-greeting to Lucy — is it Lucy or Ruth? — that gathers wise sayings in a Book.

C. LAMB

We shall be soon again at Colebrook.

CCCCLII. — TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

August 10, 1825.

Dear Southey, — You 'll know who this letter comes from by opening slap-dash upon the text, as in the good old times. I never could come into the custom of envelopes; 't is a modern foppery; the Plinian correspondence gives no hint of such. In singleness of sheet and meaning then I thank you for your little book. I am ashamed to add a codicil of thanks for your *Book of the*

Church. I scarce feel competent to give an opinion of the latter; I have not reading enough of that kind to venture at it. I can only say the fact, that I have read it with attention and interest. Being, as you know, not quite a Churchman, I felt a jealousy at the Church taking to herself the whole deserts of Christianity, Catholic and Protestant, from Druid extirpation downwards. I call all good Christians the Church, Capillarians and all. But I am in too light a humour to touch these matters. May all our churches flourish!

Two things staggered me in the poem (and one of them staggered both of us). I cannot away with a beautiful series of verses, as I protest they are, commencing "Jenner." 'T is like a choice banquet opened with a pill or an electuary — physic stuff. T'other is, we cannot make out how Edith should be no more than ten years old. By'r Lady, we had taken her to be some sixteen or upwards. We suppose you have only chosen the round number for the metre. Or poem and dedication may be both older than they pretend to; but then some hint might have been given; for, as it stands, it may only serve some day to puzzle the parish reckoning. But without inquiring further (for 't is ungracious to look into a lady's years), the dedication is eminently pleasing and tender, and we wish Edith May Southey joy of it. Something, too, struck us as if we had heard of the death of John May.

A John May's death was a few years since in the papers. We think the tale one of the quietest, prettiest things we have seen. You have been temperate in the use of localities, which generally spoil poems laid in exotic regions. You mostly cannot stir out (in such things) for humming-birds and fire-flies. A tree is a magnolia, &c. — Can I but like the truly catholic spirit? “Blame as thou mayest the Papist's erring creed” — which and other passages brought me back to the old Anthology days and the admonitory lesson to “Dear George” on *The Vesper Bell*, a little poem which retains its first hold upon me strangely.

The compliment to the translatress is daintily conceived. Nothing is choicer in that sort of writing than to bring in some remote, impossible parallel, — as between a great empress and the inobtrusive quiet soul who digged her noiseless way so perseveringly through that rugged Paraguay mine. How she Dobrizhoffer'd it all out, it puzzles my slender Latinity to conjecture. Why do you seem to sanction Landor's unfeeling allegorising away of honest Quixote! He may as well say Strap is meant to symbolise the Scottish nation before the Union, and Random since that act of dubious issue; or that Partridge means the Mystical Man, and Lady Bellaston typifies the Woman upon Many Waters. Gebir, indeed, may mean the state of the hop markets last month, for anything I know to the contrary.

That all Spain overflowed with romancical books (as Madge Newcastle calls them) was no reason that Cervantes should not smile at the matter of them ; nor even a reason that, in another mood, he might not multiply them, deeply as he was tinctured with the essence of them. Quixote is the father of gentle ridicule, and at the same time the very depository and treasury of chivalry and highest notions. Marry, when somebody persuaded Cervantes that he meant only fun, and put him upon writing that unfortunate Second Part with the confederacies of that unworthy duke and most contemptible duchess, Cervantes sacrificed his instinct to his understanding.

We got your little book but last night, being at Enfield, to which place we came about a month since, and are having quiet holydays. Mary walks her twelve miles a day some days, and I my twenty on others. 'T is all holiday with me now, you know. The change works admirably.

For literary news, in my poor way, I have a one-act farce going to be acted at the Haymarket ; but when ? is the question. 'T is an extravaganza, and like enough to follow *Mr. H.* *The London Magazine* has shifted its publishers once more, and I shall shift myself out of it. It is fallen. My ambition is not at present higher than to write nonsense for the play-houses, to eke out a somewhat contracted income. *Tempus erat.* There was a time, my dear Cornwallis,

when the Muse, &c. But I am now in Mac Fleckno's predicament, —

Promised a play, and dwindled to a farce.

Coleridge is better (was, at least, a few weeks since) than he has been for years. His accomplishing his book at last has been a source of vigour to him. We are on a half visit to his friend Allsop, at a Mrs. Leishman's, Enfield, but expect to be at Colebrooke Cottage in a week or so, where, or anywhere, I shall be always most happy to receive tidings from you.

G. Dyer is in the height of a uxorious paradise. His honeymoon will not wane till he wax cold. Never was a more happy pair, since Acme and Septimius, and longer. Farewell, with many thanks, dear S. Our loves to all round your Wrekin. Your old friend, C. LAMB

CCCCLIII.—TO WILLIAM HONE

August 10, 1825.

Dear H.,—Will you direct these from Miss Hazlitt to Mr. Thelwall, whose address I know not?

I have returned the Shakspeare *errata*, finding much nonsense; good principles of correction, but sad wildness in the application of them. No magazine, as magazines go, would pay for the inclosed. Thelwall may take them for friendship's sake. Yours, as before, C. L.

CCCCLIV. — TO C. C. CLARKE

Dear C., — I shall do very well. The sunshine is medicinal, as you will find when you venture hither some fine day. Enfield is beautiful.

Yours truly, C. LAMB

CCCCLV. — TO WILLIAM HONE

August 12, 1825.

Dear Hone, — Your books are right acceptable. I did not enter farther about Dogget, because on second thoughts the book I mean does not refer to him. A coach from the “Bell,” or “Bell and Crown,” sets off to Enfield at half-past four. Put yourself in it *to-morrow* afternoon and come to us; take a bed at an inn, and waste all Sunday with us. We desire to show you the country here. If we are out when you come, the maid is instructed to keep you upon tea and proper bread and butter till we come home. Pray secure me the last number of the *Every Day Book*, that which has S. R[ay] in it, which by mistake *has never come*. Did our newsman not bring it on Monday? Don't send home for it, for if I get it hereafter (so I have it at last), it is all I want. Mind, we shall expect you Saturday night or Sunday morning. There are Edmonton coaches from Bishopsgate every half hour. The walk thence to Enfield easy across the fields; a mile and half.

Yours truly, C. LAMB

This invitation is "ingenuous." I assure you we want to see you here. Or will Sunday night and all day Monday suit you better? The coach sets you down at Mrs. Leishman's.

CCCCLVI.— TO WILLIAM HONE

August, 1825.

Dear Hone, — I sent you a note by post to-day, but this comes sooner by a friend. Put yourself in the coach ("Bell," Holborn) to-morrow (Saturday) afternoon, half-past four. Come and take a bed at an inn, and waste Sunday with us gloriously. We have dainty spots to show you. If you can't come, come Sunday and stay Monday. Coaches to Edmonton go hourly from Bishopsgate, but we shall hope for you on Saturday (to-morrow) evening.

C. LAMB

Pray send the inclosed, and burn what comes inclosed in the *post* letter. Put *last week's Every Day* in your pocket, which we have missed; that which has S. R[ay].

CCCCLVII.— TO THOMAS ALLSOP

My dear Allsop, — Mrs. Leishman gives us hopes of seeing you all on Sunday. We shall provide a bit of beef or something on that day, so you need not market. We are very comfortable here. Our kindest remembrances to Mrs.

Allsop and the chits. We lying-in people go out on Saturday, Mrs. L. bids me say, and that you may come that evening and find beds, &c.

Yours truly, C. LAMB

CCCCLVIII.—TO THOMAS ALLSOP

September 9, 1825.

My dear Allsop,—We are exceedingly grieved for your loss. When your note came, my sister went to Pall Mall, to find you, and saw Mrs. L. and was a little comforted to find Mrs. A. had returned to Enfield before the distressful event. I am very feeble, can scarce move a pen; got home from Enfield on the Friday; and on Monday following was laid up with a most violent nervous fever, second this summer, have had leeches to my temples, have not had, nor cannot get yet, a night's sleep. So you will excuse more from
Yours truly, C. LAMB

Our most kind remembrances to poor Mrs. Allsop. A line to say how you both are will be most acceptable.

CCCCLIX.—TO THOMAS ALLSOP

September 24, 1825.

My dear Allsop,—Come not near this unfortunate roof yet a while. My disease is clearly but slowly going. Field is an excellent attend-

ant. But Mary's anxieties have overturned her. She has her old Miss James with her, without whom I should not feel a support in the world. We keep in separate apartments, and must weather it. Let me know all of your healths. Kindest love to Mrs. Allsop. C. LAMB

Can you call at Mrs. Burney, 26 James Street, and *tell her*, and that I can see no one here in this state. If Martin return — if well enough, I will meet him somewhere; *don't let him come*.

CCCCLX. — TO THOMAS ALLSOP

Dear Allsop, — My injunctions about not calling here had solely reference to your being unwell, &c., at home. I am most glad to see you on my own account. I dine at three on either Sunday; come then, or earlier or later; only before dinner I generally walk. Your dining here will be quite convenient. I of course have a joint that day. I owe you for newspapers, Cobbetts, pheasants, what not?

Yours most obliged, C. L.

P. S. I am so well (except rheumatism, which forbids my being out on evenings) that I forgot to mention my health in the above. Mary is very poorly yet. Love to Mrs. Allsop.

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